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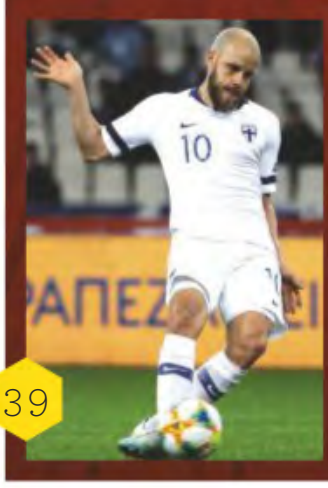

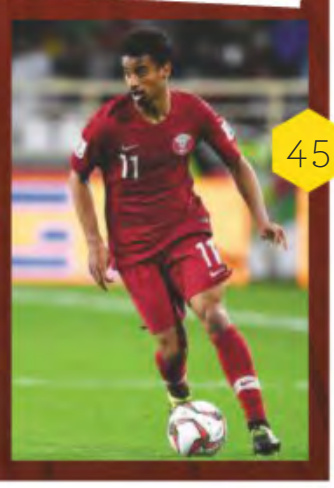

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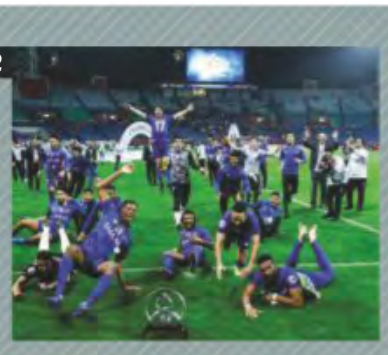

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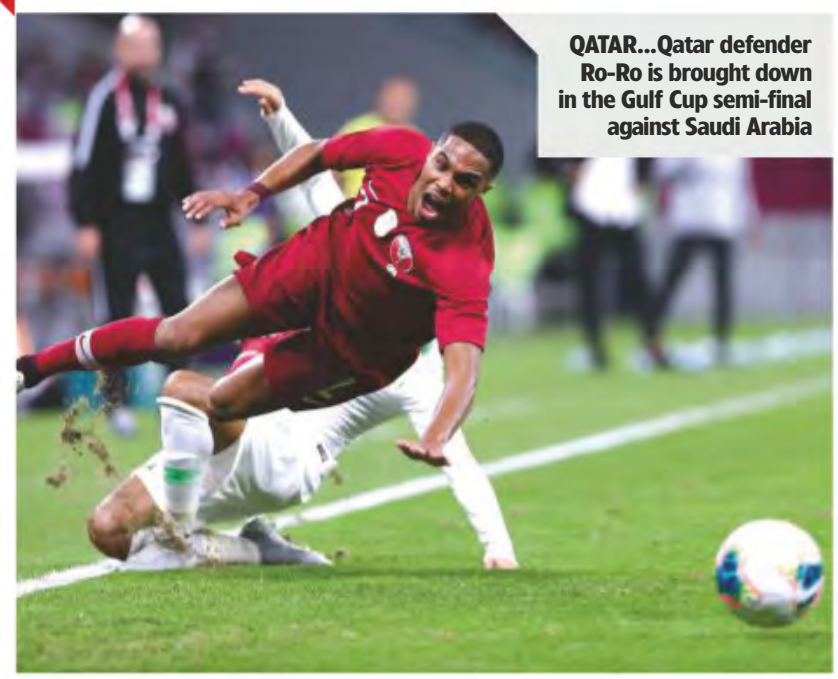

QATAR...Qatar defender Ro-Ro is brought down in the Gulf Cup semi-final against Saudi Arabia

CHINA...coach Fabio Cannavaro and his Guangzhou Evergrande players celebrate winning the 2019 Chinese Super League title

DENMARK...Copenhagen fans light up one end of the Parken Stadium ahead of their Europa League tie with Malmo

MEXICO...Henry Martin of America (centre) competes with Gabriel Achilier and Efrain Velarde of Morelia

GREECE... Olympiakos defender Yassine Meriah (stripes) heads clear from Red Star's Tomane in the Champions League

HONDURAS...Olimpia fans celebrate beating Marathon to win the Apertura tournament

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FROM THE EDITOR

Congratulations to Lionel Messi, *World Soccer*'s World Player of the Year for 2019. It is hard to argue with Barcelona's Argentinian superstar being the most feted footballer of the past 12 months, although it was one of the tightest votes of recent times.

Credit, too, to Liverpool and Jurgen Klopp, World Team and World Manager of the Year. The European champions were emphatic winners in both categories, though their victories raise many questions about the changing nature of our sport. For the first time, this season's Champions League knockout stage will only feature teams from the big five leagues of England, France, Germany, Italy and Spain.

> For the first time, this season's Champions League knockout stage will only feature teams from Europe's big five leagues

The growing inequalities in the European club game are a theme to which we will return in greater detail in the coming months, along with a review of Liverpool's trip to Qatar for the Club World Cup, which deadlines precluded us from reporting on this month.

Meantime, there are more than enough events and people from the past 12 months to reflect upon in this issue. Let's hope that 2020 is as eventful a year as 2019.

Gavin Hamilton, Editor

10 SIGNIFICANT EVENTS THIS MONTH

1 Messi wins World Player of the Year award p32
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3 Flamengo triumph in Copa Libertadores p22
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5 Teixeira banned for life by FIFA p10
6 Liverpool are voted World Team of the Year p36
7 Cruzeiro relegated in Brazil p60
8 Al Hilal crowned Asian club champions p62
9 Bahrain win Gulf Cup p72
10 Europa League draw p12

SWITZERLAND

Teixeira finally handed FIFA life ban

Judgement...Teixeira

Even when the Qatar World Cup fades into history, tales of the turmoil and skulduggery which surrounded FIFA's awarding of the 2018 and 2022 finals will linger. Even now, more than nine years since that fateful December day in snowy Zurich, more icicles of insight continue to thaw out.

The latest flurry emerged as FIFA's ethics committee issued a life ban and $1 million fine to Ricardo Teixeira for his complicity at the centre of the FIFAGate scandal.

The penalty was academic because the former son-in-law of long-time FIFA president Joao Havelange has long since taken his leave from the presidency of the Brazilian CBF, the FIFA and CONMEBOL ExCos, and leadership of the 2014 World Cup organising body.

FIFA's ethics judgment drew heavily on testimony from the New York trials of Jose Maria Marin, Juan Angel Napout and Manuel Burga, with the former pair guilty and jailed, the other cleared on a technicality. It revealed how the 2018 and 2022 bidding process was almost perfectly designed to be plundered by a bribery system already in place and run out of CONMEBOL HQ in Asuncion. Key players were Teixeira, Argentina's Julio Grondona – who was ultimately FIFA's senior vice-president as well as finance chairman – and CONMEBOL president Nicolas Leoz.

In November 2015 Teixeira was among the

"I can only tell you that his behaviour was not just disrespectful to me but to all of his team-mates. Nobody has the right to do what he did"

Galatasaray coach Fatih Terim was far from happy with the attitude in training of Steven Nzonzi, who is on loan from Roma

swath of 40-plus individuals and companies indicted for "racketeering, wire fraud and money laundering conspiracies [concerning] participation in a 24-year scheme to enrich themselves through the corruption of international soccer".

FIFA launched an ethics inquiry but a hearing was called only last May. By then Teixeira was ensconced back in Rio de Janeiro, safe from US claws courtesy of an extradition-defying clause in the Brazilian constitution. His lawyers also posited that the ethics panel had no jurisdiction as he had quit all his football positions in 2012.

According to a witness "Ricardo Teixeira had very unusual and weird banking, or financial houses instructions" which involved bouncing illicit monies around dummy accounts "in the Middle East [including in Jerusalem], in far Asia, in Andorra, in Europe, and always [so it] was impossible to know who it was".

Another witness said: "I was called to Grondona's apartment in Buenos Aires in January 2011 and he had a telephone conversation with Ricardo Teixeira. When he got off he told me that the $1m owed to Teixeira should be paid to him. He explained Teixeira owed him $1m because Julio Grondona voted for Qatar 2022 [as did Leoz]."

The source, or sources, due to pay $1m to each of the trio remain unidentified.

Keir Radnedge

HEROES & VILLAINS

ANSU FATI

At 17 years and 40 days, the Barcelona striker became the youngest scorer in Champions League history with his goal at Internazionale.

ROBERT LEWANDOWSKI

The Bayern Munich striker scored the fastest quadruple in Champions League history as his team thrashed Red Star Belgrade 6-0 in Group B. He took just 14 minutes and 31 seconds to net four goals.

Quick...Robert Lewandowski

OLIVIER SADRAN

With Toulouse's form so poor this season, the French club's president has offered a refund to season-ticket holders who can no longer bare to watch their side. He said: "People who no longer wish to participate in the second half of this season, no longer go to the stadium, can give their season tickets back and will be reimbursed for the second half of the season. What we are offering on the pitch is not worth paying for, so this process seems logical to me."

JOAQUIN

Real Betis' captain scored all three goals in his side's 3-2 victory over Athletic Bilbao – the first treble of his career which, at 38 years and 140 days old, made him the oldest player to score a hat-trick in one of Europe's big five leagues.

Veteran...Joaquin is the oldest hat-trick hero

Dumb...the front page that caused offence

CORRIERE DELLO SPORT

The Italian newspaper's "Black Friday" front page was condemned as "one of the dumbest" things he had seen by Internazionale striker Romelu Lukaku, and "wrong and insensitive" by Roma's Chris Smalling – the two players pictured with the headline.

CCTV

The Chinese state television channel pulled its coverage of Arsenal's Premier League game against Manchester City after Gunners midfielder Mesut Ozil posted a social message criticising China's treatment of Uighur Muslims.

Off...Clinton Mata

KREPIN DIATTA & CLINTON MATA

The Club Brugge duo were both shown red cards for celebrating an injury-time equaliser against Galatasaray in the Champions League.

AURELIO DE LAURENTIIS

Napoli's president fined the club's first-team players a total of more than €2.5million after they refused to attend a week-long retreat following a run of poor results. Coach Carlo Ancelotti who was against the training camp idea, was later dismissed.

"That makes it even more bitter. We deserved to go through but we let it slip through our own hands. We have to look at ourselves"

Ajax coach Erik Ten Haag reflects on the defeat to Valencia that saw last season's semi-finalists miss out on the Champions League knockout stage

Big guns line-up

European draws bring Europowers together

Champions League

ROUND OF 16 FIRST LEGS

FEBRUARY 18
Borussia Dortmund v Paris Saint-Germain
Atletico Madrid v Liverpool

FEBRUARY 19
Atalanta v Valencia
Tottenham Hotspur v RB Leipzig

FEBRUARY 25
Chelsea v Bayern Munich
Napoli v Barcelona

FEBRUARY 26
Real Madrid v Manchester City
Lyon v Juventus

SECOND LEGS

MARCH 10
Valencia v Atalanta
RB Leipzig v Tottenham Hotspur

MARCH 11
Paris Saint-Germain v Borussia Dortmund
Liverpool v Atletico Madrid

MARCH 17
Manchester City v Real Madrid
Juventus v Lyon

MARCH 18
Bayern Munich v Chelsea
Barcelona v Napoli

QUARTER-FINALS
DRAW: March 20
FIRST LEGS: April 7/8
SECOND LEGS: April 14/15

SEMI-FINALS
DRAW: 20 March 20
FIRST LEGS: April 28/29
SECOND LEGS: May 5/6

FINAL
MAY 30
Ataturk Olympic Stadium, Istanbul

Champions League... Istanbul

Europa League... Gdansk

Europa League

ROUND OF 32
FIRST LEGS FEBRUARY 20; SECOND LEGS ON FEBRUARY 26 OR 27
Wolves v Espanyol
Sporting v Istanbul Basaksehir
Getafe v Ajax
Bayer Leverkusen v Porto
Copenhagen v Celtic
APOEL v Basle
CFR Cluj v Sevilla
Olympiakos v Arsenal
AZ v LASK
Club Brugge v Manchester United
Ludogorets v Internazionale
Eintracht Frankfurt v Red Bull Salzburg
Shakhtar Donetsk v Benfica
Wolfsburg v Malmo
Roma v Gent
Rangers v Braga

ROUNF OF 16
DRAW: February 28
FIRST LEGS: March 12
SECOND LEGS: March 19

QUARTER-FINALS
DRAW: March 20
FIRST LEGS: April 9
SECOND LEGS: April 16

SEMI-FINALS
DRAW: March 20
FIRST LEGS: April 30
SECOND LEGS: May 7

FINAL
MAY 27
Gdansk Stadium, Poland

WorldSoccer

NEXT MONTH

Champions League & Europa League knockout stage previews

+ SERGE GNABRY PLAYER BIO

+ CLUB WORLD CUP IN QATAR

+ SOUTH AMERICAN LEAGUES REVIEW

ON SALE JANUARY 24

Keir RADNEDGE
THE INSIDER

FIFA on collision course over Russia doping

Gianni Infantino is becoming a member of the International Olympic Committee just in time to weigh into the storm over Russia's ban from international sport, which will loom over the run-up to the 2020 Tokyo Games and the 2022 World Cup.

FIFA does not take kindly to being ordered around by outsiders, hence the continuing resentment in Zurich at the FIFAGate assault by the FBI in 2015 and the coat-tails follow-through by the Swiss attorney-general.

That circle-the-wagons stance is written into the statutes of not only FIFA but all six regional confederations and the 211 national associations, thereby prohibiting interference from governments or the police on pain of suspension.

For FIFA to suspend its own is OK. For anyone else? Anathema.

This is what pulls football into the ambit of Russia's stand-off with the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA). Not for the first time and not willingly.

FIFA was always reluctant to engage with WADA until, in 2012, it accepted that signing up to the anti-doping code was essential for membership of the world sport family. Hence FIFA accepts WADA's dope-case disciplinary system. It accepts the need for a rigorous testing regime before and during the World Cup and accepts the "whereabouts" system of out-of-competition testing – of which failure to adhere to cost Rio Ferdinand an eight-month ban in 2013.

But the latest twist regarding Russia is something very new: no one has ever told FIFA who may, or may not, play at its World Cup. Especially not a major power such as Russia.

The tale goes back to the Winter Olympics, in Vancouver, in 2010 when Russia finished a poor 11th in the medals table. Such a performance was extremely worrying when president Vladimir Putin had authorised the expenditure of $60million on hosting the next Games in Sochi.

Reports to WADA by former president Dick Pound and law professor Richard McLaren claimed this prompted the creation of a doping and cover-up programme, that was later backed-up by a whistle-blowing athlete, her coach the fleeing head of the Moscow anti-doping lab.

When WADA sought access to the laboratory's records, the Russians stalled. And even when they did release data early this year it was flawed. WADA therefore decided to decree a four-year ban on Russia from competing in and hosting major international events.

> For FIFA to suspend its own is OK. For anyone else? Anathema

That suspension will include the Olympic Games in Tokyo in August and then the World Cup in Qatar.

However, Russia's participation in the finals of the 2020 European Championship and Saint-Petersburg's staging of four matches this summer, plus the 2021 UEFA Champions League Final, are not affected. This is because Euro 2020 is considered a "regional" rather than a "major" – as in world – championship. UEFA may be grateful, for once, to hear its blue-riband national-team event thus downgraded.

Infantino, as FIFA president, was always going to be concerned about the issue, but now he has an even more influential role since he is about to be admitted into the "magic circle" of IOC members, who have their own divisions over Russian doping.

The head of FIFA has generally been an IOC member on the basis of the worldwide significance of the sport. Infantino's prospective accession to the seat left by Sepp Blatter in 2015 was confirmed by the IOC executive board and will be sanctioned at the IOC Session on the eve of the Winter Youth Games in Lausanne in January.

Evidence of sports at war has been

Problems...Gianni Infantino (left) and Vladimir Putin with the World Cup

Threatened...Russia's Artyom Dzyuba

seen before and was on show in Rio de Janeiro at the 2016 Olympic Games, when athletics was one of only a few sports to impose a blanket ban on Russian competitors.

As things stand, Russia can still compete in the 2022 World Cup qualifying competition but, should the team gain a place in Qatar, it would not be allowed to denote itself as Russia, fly its flag or hear its anthem at the finals.

Long before then, however, Russia can challenge the WADA ban at the Court of Arbitration for Sport and before the Swiss Federal Court.

A holding statement from Zurich read: "FIFA has taken note of the decision [and] is in contact with WADA and ASOIF [Association of Summer Olympics International Federations] to clarify the extent of the decision in regards to football."

Infantino will hope fervently that, before Tokyo, the Olympic movement comes up with a solution with which football can also live.

FIFA does not, as previously noted, like taking orders.

Platini hits back on return

Now that Michel Platini has completed a four-year ban from football for accepting a $2million "disloyal payment" from FIFA by approval of then-president Sepp Blatter, the 64-year-old Frenchman has set down his side of the story.

Above all, he blames "schizophrenic" Blatter as having said one thing to his face and the opposite behind his back.

It was at FIFA Congress in 2010, in Johannesburg, that Blatter told Platini that he would stand for FIFA re-election in 2011 and then leave the stage for the UEFA boss Platini in 2015.

However, by 2013 Platini realised that his route map to the FIFA presidency was no longer so clear, explaining: "Our relationship had never been a simple one. I believe Blatter had a dual complex towards me: one of superiority in taking me for an imbecile but also one of inferiority because he envied me my playing career and my popularity."

Noting that Blatter had become "more cool and distant", he was not surprised when, a year later, the Swiss decided to stand for re-election because "FIFA is my life".

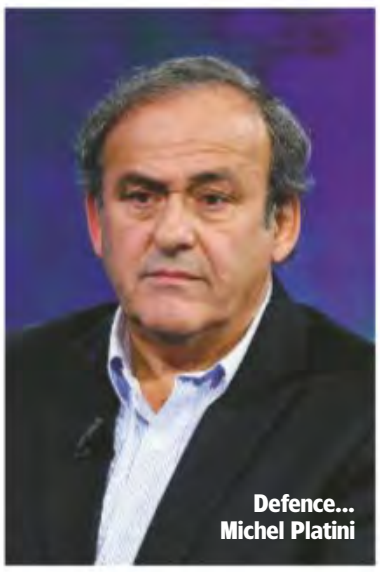
A year later Platini was in Warsaw for the Europa League Final on the day Swiss police enacted their early-morning arrests at the Baur au Lac hotel in Zurich.

Two days later Blatter was re-elected. Within weeks he had announced his decision to stand down and Platini announced his own candidacy. Then, fatefully, on September 25 legal director Marco Villiger – "the keeper of FIFA's secrets" – summoned Blatter and Platini from an ExCo meeting for questioning by police. And that, effectively, was that.

The timing, for Platini, was so Swiss attorney-general Michael Lauber could enjoy a PR coup of his own after having been outplayed by the FBI.

But the abiding question is, amid all the documentation seized by police, how did they go straight to Blatter's approval of Platini's long-delayed $2m?

Blatter blamed Villiger, but Platini blames Blatter and insists FIFA secretary-general Jerome Valcke and Philippe Blatter – Sepp's nephew and head of TV rights partner InFront – had been in on the plot to secure "my political elimination".



Defence... Michel Platini

WINNERS

FLAMENGO
Secured a unique double by winning the Brazilian league title just days after an astonishing comeback to win the Copa Libertadores against River Plate.

CELTIC
Victory against Glasgow rivals Rangers in the Scottish League Cup Final saw the club win their 10th consecutive domestic trophy.

BAHRAIN
Won their first-ever Gulf Cup when they beat Saudi Arabia 1-0 in the Final.

LOSERS

AJAX
Champions League semi-finalists last season, the Dutch side failed to get out of their group this time around and drop into the Europa League.

ALEKSI ZHELYAZKOV
His reward for leading Bulgarian club Ludogorets to a last-32 showdown with Internazionale in the Europa League was to be replaced as coach by Pavel Vrba.

ANDROS TOWNSEND
The Crystal Palace winger admitted losing £46,000 in a night by betting on his phone while on loan at Birmingham City in 2012.

Jonathan WILSON

TECHNICALLY SPEAKING

Playing the regeneration game

How long is too long? At what point do players, on hearing a manager's motivational words, begin to shrug and think we've heard it all before?

At what point does a manager, having worked out a successful way to play, have to accept that others have begun to suss him out and that he needs to make significant changes?

At what point do players, used to playing with the same team-mates in the same style, become stale?

When, in football, does evolution become necessary?

It was the Hungarian coach Bela Guttmann, one of the game's great wanderers, who popularised the expression "the third year is fatal" – even though it was in his third season at Benfica that they produced probably their definitive performance under him, beating Real Madrid 5-2 in 1962 to retain the European Cup.

But then again, despite Eusebio breaking into the team that season, Benfica failed to complete a hat-trick of league titles, finishing second behind Sporting. It may be that the early symptoms of decline had begun to emerge even before Guttmann's meeting with the Benfica board, at which they rejected his demand for a bonus for winning the European Cup, precipitating his departure and the "curse" that has seen Benfica lose in eight European Finals since.

Jose Mourinho, who is often compared to Guttmann although their backgrounds and footballing philosophies could hardly be more different, has only once lasted more than three years at a club, and that was in his first spell at Chelsea when he was deposed in the September of his fourth season, by which time his relationship with his squad and the board had deteriorated.

Intense... Pep Guardiola

It's notable, too, that Pep Guardiola struggled in his fourth season in charge at Barcelona and is now finding life difficult in his fourth campaign at Manchester City.

Mauricio Pochettino, sacked by Tottenham Hotspur in November in his sixth season in charge, had begun to fear entropy two years ago, begging for significant investment to refresh the squad. Perhaps for a club on the way up – each season reaching new ground as Spurs did, both literally in the stadium move and metaphorically in terms of their progress – decay can be deferred, but what was striking this

Plan... Jetro Willems of Newcastle scores against Man City

season was how weary Pochettino's players seemed, how much less focused their pressing appeared.

In part, the issue is directly tactical as teams get worked out. A prime example is that of Ipswich Town, who were promoted under Alf Ramsey in 1961. Their use of Jimmy Leadbitter as a withdrawn left-winger foxed opponents, who didn't even have the advantage of regular television coverage, and in their first season up they won the league. The following season they faced Tottenham in the Charity Shield and Spurs, having played them twice before, had worked out a way of combatting Leadbitter. Ipswich lost 5-1 and were involved in a relegation scrap when Ramsey was made England manager the following March.

To suggest Manchester City have been worked out is over-simplistic, but what is true is that Guardiola's brand of high-tempo possession football, based on positional mastery, does not terrify teams as it once did. There's no longer a sense of shame for an opponent in having only 25 per cent of the ball. Teams like Norwich City, Wolverhampton Wanderers and Newcastle United know that City can be frustrated if you sit deep against them and deny them space. And if you can do that, City are vulnerable defensively. It's not easy, obviously, but sides now have a basic plan and some sense of hope.

It is also a matter of personality. Guardiola is ferociously intense; it is part of what has made him so successful. He drives himself exceptionally hard and analyses opponents with ferocious rigour. His game preparation is unimpeachable and no manager is less likely to be taken unawares. But that approach takes its toll on the players.

At Bayern Munich there was a collective sigh of relief when Guardiola left as players felt they could breath again. Perhaps Carlo Ancelotti, his successor, was ultimately too laid back but there was no doubt that the players relished the more relaxed atmosphere in his first few months in charge – just as Ajax responded to the departure of Rinus Michels and his iron fist in 1971 by producing arguably their best football under Stefan Kovacs.

There are other issues at City this season. For example, the decision not to replace Vincent Kompany was exposed as a needless gamble by the injury to Aymeric Laporte. While Fernandinho has dropped back to operate as a central defender, Rodri has struggled to replicate his team-mate's consistent excellence at the back of midfield.

> It was the Hungarian coach Bela Guttmann who popularised the expression "the third year is fatal"

While City have been a little unlucky this season, Liverpool have been both fortunate and relentless. The "expected goals" charts show City comfortably at the top of the table – that they are not similarly placed in the Premier League is not just a matter of luck but also of something equally intangible: confidence, form, ruthlessness. Call it what you will, but City this season have so far, somehow, lacked the edge of the past two seasons.

That judgement is hugely subject to confirmation bias – they aren't getting the same results so something must be wrong. Yet we also know that players tire of being remorselessly drilled and we know Guardiola, intense as he is, seems to feel the pressure more at a club as time goes by.

Regeneration, in terms of tactics, approach and personnel, may be the hardest thing in management. WS

Learning ...Spurs (in white) thwart Ipswich back in the Sixties

"I was convinced Corini was from Verona. If I had known he was from Brescia I wouldn't have taken him on. It's very difficult to coach in your own city"

Brescia owner Massimo Cellino didn't know coach Eugenio Corini was a local

PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

IN

Greek mission... Massimo Carrera

Bottom...Nigel Pearson

EUROPE

Bottom of the Premier League, Watford appointed **NIGEL PEARSON** until the end of the season following the dismissal of Quique Sanchez Flores after less than 90 days in charge.

EUGENIO CORINI returned as coach of Brescia, who sacked his replacement Fabio Grosso after three Serie A games.

Coach of the Romania side that reached the semi-finals of the European Under-21s in June, **MIREL RADOI** will lead the senior side in March's Euro 2020 play-offs after Cosmin Contra left his post following a 5-0 loss to Spain.

Nice signed Denmark left-back **RIZA DURMISI** on a six-month loan from Lazio ahead of the January transfer window.

MASSIMO CARRERA, who won the Russian Premier League title with Spartak Moscow in 2017, replaced Nikolaos Kostenoglou as coach of Greek side AEK Athens.

Scottish Premiership strugglers Hearts named **DANIEL STENDEL** manager.

CONCACAF

Sporting Kansas City signed Mexico international striker **ALAN PULIDO** from Guadalajara for a club-record transfer fee of around $9.5million.

Former USA skipper **CLAUDIO REYNA** quit as sporting director of New York City to take the same job with new expansion club Austin, who will join MLS in 2021. NYC replaced him by promoting technical director **DAVID LEE**.

Colombian coach **OSCAR PAREJA** took charge of MLS side Orlando City after being relieved of his duties with Mexican club Tijuana.

AFRICA

PATRICE CARTERON replaced Micho Sredojevic as coach of Zamalek after the Egyptians lost 3-0 to TP Mazembe of DR Congo in the CAF Champions League.

German coach **JOSEF ZINNBAUER** took charge of South African side Orlando Pirates.

Two-time Africa Cup of Nations winner **HANY SAID** retired at the age of 39 and left Misr Lel Makkasa to take up the post of sporting director at their Egyptian rivals Pyramids.

ASIA

Indian Super League club Chennaiyin appointed **OWEN COYLE** to replace John Gregory as coach.

Indian season...Owen Coyle

Return...Jurgen Klinsmann

Klinsmann back in the Bundesliga

JURGEN KLINSMANN replaced Ante Covic as coach of Hertha Berlin until the end of the season.

Hertha won just three games in the first three months of the Bundesliga campaign. The ex Germany and USA boss was initially appointed to Hertha's supervisory board as an advisor to investor Lars Windhorst, who now owns 49.9 per cent of the club's shares. Klinsmann will have former Werder Bremen and Ingolstadt coach **ALEXANDER NOURI** as his assistant.

"An amazing human being, a true gentleman with an infectious smile; someone I have had the privilege to call a friend. You will never be forgotten"

Former Australia keeper Mark Schwarzer pays tribute to Pim Verbeek

Appointments, sackings and loans

Gone...Robert Prosinecki

EUROPE

Arsenal sacked manager **UNAI EMERY** after 18 months in charge following a run of seven games without a win, while **MARCO SILVA** was fired by Everton after they lost 5-2 at Liverpool and slipped into the Premier League relegation zone.

ROBERT PROSINECKI left Bosnia ahead of their Euro 2020 play-off with Northern Ireland.

Defending Cypriot champions APOEL parted company with German coach **THOMAS DOLL**.

SOUTH AMERICA

Former Argentina and Chile boss **JORGE SAMPAOLI** resigned after leading Santos to a second-place finish in the Brazilian league.

AFRICA

Eswatini and Sudan parted company with coaches **KOSTA PAPIC** and **ZDRAVKO LOGARUSIC** respectively.

Runner-up...Jorge Sampaoli

ASIA

Dutchman **BERT VAN MARWIJK** parted company with the United Arab Emirates after just nine months as national coach. Oman terminated the contract of his fellow countryman **ERWIN KOEMAN** after their failure to retain the Gulf Cup.

Belgian **MARC WILMOTS** left his position as coach of Iran after six games.

Italian **ANDREA STRAMACCIONI** stepped down as boss of Esteghlal with the side top of the Iranian league.

Australia skipper **MARK MILLIGAN**, who was a member of four World Cup squads, retired from international football after winning 80 caps for his country.

Ancelotti out at Napoli

Napoli sacked **CARLO ANCELOTTI** less than three hours after he guided them into the Champions League knockout stage with a 4-0 victory at home to Genk – their first win in 10 games in all competitions.

Former Milan boss **GENNARO GATTUSO** was announced the next day as his replacement.

All over...Carlo Ancelotti

OBITUARIES

Martin HARVEY (1941-2019)
A one-club man who played more than 300 games in a 13-year career with Sunderland and won 34 caps for Northern Ireland. Later managed Carlisle United and was Billy Bingham's assistant in 1982 when Northern Ireland reached the World Cup finals.

Kobi KUHN (1943-2019)
Capped 63 times by Switzerland and won six league titles and five domestic cups as a midfielder with Zurich – who he later coached. Took over the national side in 2001 and was in charge until they were eliminated as co-hosts of Euro 2008.

Daniel LECLERCQ (1949-2019)
Known as "the Druid", he coached Lens to their only Ligue 1 title, in 1998, having spent nine seasons with the club as a centre-half. Previously with Marseille where he was part of the squad that won the French title in 1971 and 1972.

Villa boss...Ron Saunders

Bald Eagle...Jim Smith

Ron SAUNDERS (1932-2019)
Led Aston Villa to the league title in 1981 and also won two League Cups during his eight years with the club. The only man to have taken charge of midlands rivals Villa, West Bromwich Albion and Birmingham City, he also reached three successive League Cup finals as the manager of three different clubs: Norwich City in 1973, Manchester City in 1974 and Villa in 1975. Portsmouth's third-highest scorer of all time with 162 goals.

Jim SMITH (1940-2019)
After a lower-league playing career, the manager known as the "Bald Eagle" took Queens Park Rangers to the League Cup Final in 1986 and Derby County into the Premier League in 1996. He also oversaw promotions at Colchester United, Birmingham City and Oxford United, and had further spells in charge of Boston United, Blackburn Rovers, Newcastle United and Portsmouth.

Pim VERBEEK (1956-2019)
Stepped down as Oman coach after the Asian Cup in February, having guided them to the 2018 Gulf Cup title. The Dutchman had previously been in charge of South Korea, who he led to third place at the Asian Cup in 2007, and Australia, who qualified for the 2010 World Cup under his guidance. He spent his playing career at Sparta Rotterdam before injury forced his retirement at 25.

Winner...Pim Verbeek led Oman to the Gulf Cup

Brian GLANVILLE

THE VOICE OF FOOTBALL

Jamie Vardy should seriously consider his return to the international fold

In football, age must surely be relative. All the more so in the case of the 32-year-old Jamie Vardy, who is scoring goals for fun with Leicester City.

So surely it would make sense for him to be persuaded to change his mind about retiring from international football.

Whatever his age, it's plain he has hardly ever been in better form, with such incisive and penetrative contributions. Not that this should mean the ousting of Tottenham Hotspur's Harry Kane, who is also scoring frequently, and Tammy Abraham, who has been in fine fettle since his return to Chelsea.

Vardy would perhaps not play alongside Kane, but he would be an impressive back-up. Strikers of the quality and goalscoring quantity of Chris Sutton and Peter Crouch have been advancing his claims.

In the 2015-16 season, when Leicester so surprisingly won the league title, he scored in 11 games in succession. With his pace undiminished, Vardy is a player enthusiastically on song for a team that might just be the only palpable challengers to a vibrant Liverpool.

Incisive...Vardy's goals have again inspired Leicester

> Whatever his age, it's plain he has hardly ever been in better form

Duckenfield's acquittal is not the end of the Hillsborough ordeal

It was as long ago as 1989 that 96 fans were so tragically killed at Sheffield Wednesday's Hillsborough stadium. The police commander then in charge, David Duckenfield, has admitted that he lied when he accused fans of forcing an exit gate to get into the ground when he had himself in fact given the order to do so.

The fact is that he should never have been put in command at all. Chief superintendent Brian Mole, who had done the job successfully the year before, was set aside for disciplinary reasons which appeared to derive from "horseplay" among his subordinates.

Duckenfield would be put on trial no fewer than three times, most recently in November, when he was cleared from charges of manslaughter to cries of "stitched up again" from the bereaved.

At the second inquest, in April 2016, the jury ruled that he was responsible for the death of the victims, while in January 2019 a jury failed to reach a verdict on the same charges. There was also a hung jury in 1999 when the families of those that lost their lives brought a private prosecution.

Cleared...David Duckenfield

Duckenfield refused to give evidence himself at any of the trials, claiming post-traumatic stress disorder made him an unreliable witness. He has been on anti-depressants for the last 27 years.

But it isn't the end of this horrid affair. Ex chief superintendent Donald Denton, ex detective chief inspector Alan Foster and retired solicitor Peter Metcalf, who acted for South Yorkshire police, will be on trial in April, accused of perverting the cause of justice in relation to the alleged police cover-up after the disaster.

It was reported that the policemen then on duty were urged by their superiors to destroy the notes on the disaster they had made.

Arsenal need wholesale changes

Rocky...Arsenal concede at home to Brighton

Having sacked manager Unai Emery, who for all his undoubted abilities had seemed adrift in the Premier League, Freddie Ljungberg took over after a bleak run of eight games in which Arsenal failed to win. It was the club's worst start to a season since 1975.

However, it seems unlikely that the Swede will stay in the role, and whoever replaces him faces the immediate priority of strengthening a rocky defence.

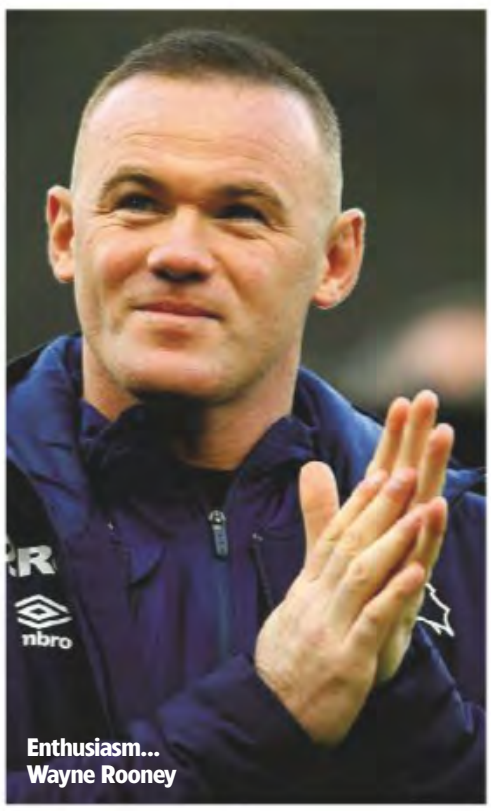
There is also the salient matter of whether the Gunners will be able to keep their two outstanding strikers, Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang and Alexandre Lacazette. And without those two star attackers, this looks a very inadequate team indeed, even with the £70million Nicolas Pepe who arrived last summer and Mesut Ozil who, for all his virtues, is essentially a peripheral talent who cannot now even hold a regular place.

Managers tend to be ex players, yet one of Arsenal's longest-serving bosses, George Allison, was a journalist. He had the confidence of Arsenal's legendary manager Herbert Chapman, who is alleged to have told him from his eventual death bed: "The team's played out, Mr Allison. We must rebuild."

Rooney looks the Derby part

It will be interesting to see what Wayne Rooney, now back in England as player-coach at Derby County, will be able to do to improve his new club's scoring record. He may be 34 but his enthusiasm is undimmed, even though his pace may not now be what it was.

He looks just the general to harness and exploit the pace of a young team.



Enthusiasm... Wayne Rooney

Read Brian Glanville's weekly online column at worldsoccer.com

eye witness

Tim Vickery reports

BRAZIL

Flamengo's greatest hour

A second Libertadores title is secured in Peru

There were tales of epic journeys to and from the Copa Libertadores Final: 60-hour treks to Peru by road, flights back complicated by the inability of Lima airport to process people in time, and supporters forking out huge amounts of cash just to get to the game.

This, of course, is the obvious problem with the new policy for the Libertadores decider. This year the traditional two-leg home-and-away format was replaced by a one-off game at a neutral ground, as it is with Europe's Champions League Final.

But South America is not Europe. Distances are vast, travel is expensive and income is badly distributed. A large percentage of fans were priced out of the showpiece occasion, and there were huge logistical problems for those with enough time and money to make the trip. With social unrest in Santiago, this 2019 Final was moved to Lima at just two-and-a-half weeks' notice.

This, then, is the downside of the one-off Final. Even so, the format would seem to be here to stay because, if there is one argument against the change, Flamengo's 2-1 victory over River Plate threw up two good arguments in favour.

One is commercial. A one-off match is of more interest to a worldwide audience, especially when the time slot is attractive to a European audience. Boosted by the presence of two giant clubs, the 2019 Libertadores decider would seem to have been a financial success.

And there is also the belief that the quality of the spectacle benefits because a neutral ground produces a better game than the previous system. Here, too, the hopes were fulfilled.

The match in Lima will live long in the memory, with the tale of its final few moments barely credible. With River Plate appearing to have the game sown up, the Argentinians were seconds from becoming the first team to retain the trophy since the start of the century – until, in a mad three minutes, Flamengo of Brazil snatched it away from them.

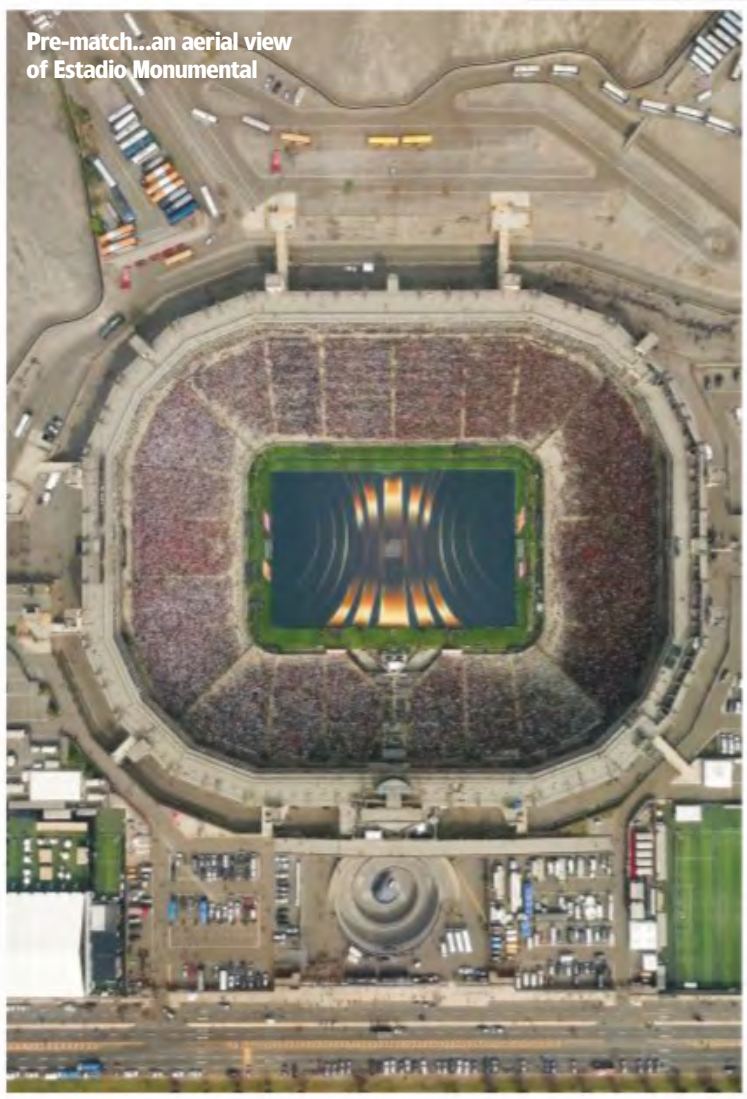
And so, under Portuguese coach Jorge Jesus, the Flamengo revolution marches on – and the day after their Libertadores triumph they were confirmed as winners of the Brazilian league (*see page 60*).

Since Jesus arrived in the middle of the year Flamengo have rolled over opponent after opponent, but there have been grounds for considering them a primarily domestic phenomenon.

In the previous five years the Libertadores had produced just one Brazilian finalist, which is an astonishing display of incompetence given the financial advantage the big Brazilian clubs enjoy over their continental rivals. And the 2018 campaign clarified the problem, as one by one the Brazilian clubs tumbled out, victims of their own excesses of caution.

One piece of information brings this home. Last year Santos visited Independiente of Argentina and were fortunate to come away with a goalless draw. The front three were Rodrygo, now at Real Madrid, and the pairing of Gabriel Barbosa and Bruno Henrique – the attacking heroes of the 2019 Flamengo side. And Santos failed to record a single shot, either on or off target.

Brazilian clubs had become victims of a commitment to deep defence and over dependence on the counter-attack. And then in marched Jesus, determined to do something completely different. He introduced concepts from top-class European football such as the high



Pre-match...an aerial view of Estadio Monumental

defensive line, which was superbly marshalled by Spanish centre-back Pablo Mari. This enabled the team to stay compact in the opposing half of the field while throwing forward as many as eight players: veteran full-backs Rafinha and Filipe Luis, dynamic central midfielders Willian Arao and Gerson, plus the front four of Barbosa and Henrique supported by playmakers Everton Ribeiro and Giorgian De Arrascaeta.

This combination of firepower and fluidity proved too much for domestic rivals – including Internacional and Gremio, who were well beaten in the quarter-finals and semi-finals

Success...celebrating Libertadores victory

Support...Flamengo fans arriving in Lima

of the Libertadores respectively. However, in the previous round, in Jesus' debut in the competition, Flamengo were beaten in Ecuador by Emelec and only came through after a nervy penalty shoot-out.

Up until that dramatic finish in the Final, River Plate's Marcelo Gallardo appeared to have worked out Flamengo as his side did not sit back and allow them to construct from deep. Instead, they pressed up, preventing the Brazilians from finding their rhythm. River's twin strikers – not a formation against which Flamengo look comfortable – worked furiously hard, with Matias Suarez and Rafael Santos Borre forming both the last line of attack and the first line of defence.

Gallardo seemed to have found a way to nullify Flamengo and knew how to hurt them: winning possession and playing quickly into the channels between the centre-back and the full-backs. And this was how River took an early lead.

With Filipe Luis loose on the ball, Enzo Perez snapped in and planted Nacho Fernandez in the space behind him. As he pulled the ball back, Suarez ran to the near post, taking three defenders with him, and opened up space for Santos Borre to shoot home on the swivel. It was a goal that managed to combine tactical planning with skill and execution. It would also have been a worthy title

Winner...Gabriel Barbosa gets Flamengo's second goal in the Final

winner – and so nearly was.

Going into the 89th minute, Flamengo had only caused one moment of real danger, and even that was controversial. Despite River being a player down, the Brazilians refused to put the ball out and constructed a move which ended with a smart Franco Armani save from Ribeiro.

There was always the hint that Flamengo's strikers would have an advantage against River's defenders in open play, but the Argentinians kept their discipline, with Perez especially efficient in defensive midfield. Flamengo brought on veteran playmaker Diego, who gave them some much needed calm on the ball and who began to find space against tiring opposition. But with time running out River looked comfortable.

Then came the decisive moment. With 20 minutes to go, River replaced Santos Borre with Lucas Pratto, who had been the previous year's hero, scoring in both legs of the Final against Boca Juniors. But he has been poor of late – and it showed. After wasting a couple of promising moves by shooting hastily, he tried to avoid a similar mistake in the 89th minute but ended up making a worse one. As River threw men forward, he twice dwelt on the ball, finally losing it to Diego, who snapped in with a tackle.

Flamengo were away, and River were caught with five men ahead of the ball. Henrique chose the right option, slipping De Arrascaeta in down the left. Across came centre-back Javier Pinola, who had played a fine match but now looked all of his 36 years. He could not snuff out the danger and De Arrascaeta squared for Barbosa to tap home at the far post.

Suddenly the game was alive. River thought about reorganising their team for extra time. They could have brought on the talented Juan Fernando Quintero in a bid to regain the ascendency, but they never got the chance.

Their heads were still in a daze when Diego played the ball forward and Barbosa managed to get the better of centre-backs Pinola and Lucas Martinez Quarta to crash home left-footed.

One of the pre-match predictions was that River would not be able to defend against Flamengo. In the end, it cost them the match – but it took 89 minutes and a schoolboy error at the other end of the pitch to expose the flaw.

Barbosa did little for 89 minutes – and managed to get himself sent off in the 95th – but what he did in the meantime was enough to win him the man of the match award. He finished the Libertadores as the competition's top scorer with nine goals – and his strike partner Henrique, who scored five and weighed in with a number of assists, was named as the player of the tournament.

Barbosa is 23, Henrique approaching 29, and – age aside – they have plenty in common. Both can be hot-headed and both have failed badly in Europe – the former in Italy and Portugal, the latter in Germany. Meanwhile, both have recently

Strike force...Bruno Henrique (left) and Gabriel Barbosa

Boosted by the presence of two giant clubs, the 2019 Libertadores Final would seem to have been a financial success

Emotional...Jorge Jesus celebrates with his staff

been called up to the Brazil squad – and Jesus has to be awarded some of the credit for that.

When the Portuguese coach took over he was looking for a target-man centre-forward. But when he could not find one he ended up using the pair as mobile strikers in a fluid 4-4-2 – and that suited both of them. Neither are out-and-out centre-forwards – Barbosa has played there more often of the two – and neither are genuine wingers, though Henrique has been used as such.

The vogue for 4-3-3 and 4-2-3-1 has therefore made it hard for either of them to play their natural game. But in a two-striker formation, Barbosa is free to drop, especially to the right, and look to cut in on the diagonal, while Henrique can move across the front line, finding space to run at defenders or arriving at the far post as an aerial threat.

Out of necessity, Jesus improvised a system that allowed his two strikers to operate as a pair and show their virtues. But what happens to them now? Barbosa is young enough to have another crack at Europe if he wants it, but is he mature enough? And is he too left-footed to trouble the best defenders? Henrique might be too old for another move across the Atlantic, but he has a great chance of featuring for the national team in the upcoming World Cup qualifiers.

Return... Flamengo back in Rio

Under Portuguese coach Jorge Jesus, the Flamengo revolution marches on

And what now happens to Flamengo? After the 2019 Club World Cup, FIFA are looking to launch an expanded version that could give the Rio side a platform from which they can aim to become global giants. With the size of their fan base they have a chance to become the biggest club outside Europe.

Their only previous Libertadores Final was in 1981 and they will surely not have to wait another 38 years for their next appearance. The fact that next year's decider will take place on home ground in the Maracana is an extra incentive to retain the title.

Those crazy three minutes in Lima could turn out to be very significant, indeed. In years to come, the Flamengo fans who made the trip to Peru may have every right to boast that they were there when football history was made. WS

Joy...fans line the streets to welcome home their heroes

WorldSoccer Awards 2019

THE RESULTS OF OUR 37TH ANNUAL AWARDS – AND THE PEOPLE WHO HELPED SHAPE THE GAME OVER THE PAST 12 MONTHS

PLAYER
TEAM
MANAGER
PEOPLE
OBITUARIES

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FIVE ALIVE FOR MESSI

Argentinian edges out Liverpool's Van Dijk for fifth World Player award

Lionel Messi is *World Soccer*'s World Player of the Year for 2019, edging out Liverpool defender Virgil Van Dijk in one of the closest contests of recent times. It is Messi's fifth *World Soccer* award – after victories in 2009, 2011, 2012 and 2015 – equalling the achievement of his great rival Cristiano Ronaldo.

Messi's astonishing form for Spanish title-winners Barcelona gave him the edge over the Champions League-winning Liverpool and Holland defender in a poll of journalists and pundits from around the world.

Messi won a 10th Liga title with Barca in May, but they were surprisingly beaten by Valencia in the Final of the Copa del Rey. And despite a wonderful performance from the Argentinian against Liverpool in the first leg of the Champions League semi-finals, they were beaten by an incredible comeback from Van Dijk and his team-mates in the return leg at Anfield.

In the summer's Copa America, Messi's Argentina lost to hosts Brazil in the semi-finals and suffered from some ▸

questionable refereeing in the third-place play-off against Chile, when Messi was controversially sent off.

In addition to his stellar displays in Liverpool's Champions League success, Van Dijk was a standout performer for Holland as they reached the Final of the inaugural UEFA Nations League.

Liverpool players featured heavily in the poll, with votes also cast for Sadio Mane (3rd place), Mohamed Salah (6th), Allison Becker (7th), Roberto Firmino (17th) and Trent Alexander-Arnold (19th). In contrast, Frenkie De Jong (8th), who joined from Ajax in the summer, was the only other Barcelona player to feature in the top 20.

Last year's winner of the World Player award, Luka Modric, finished 44th this time, while Cristiano Ronaldo – a winner in 2008, 2013, 2014, 2016 and 2017 – finished in fourth place, ahead of Kylian Mbappe, the French youngster who has eclipsed Neymar at Paris Saint-Germain.

The spectacular form of Bayern Munich striker Robert Lewandowski in the second half of 2019 was recognised with his ninth-place finish, while Eden Hazard's role in Chelsea's Europa League triumph over Arsenal was acknowledged by votes that put him in joint 10th place.

Raheem Sterling, also in joint 10th, was the highest-placed Manchester City player, a recognition of his sparking form in the Premier League but also of his increasing importance to England.

A number of women featured, the highest being American World Cup star Megan Rapinoe in 21st place, with USA team-mate Rose Lavelle 27th.

The nationalities were spread around, with nine different countries represented in the top 10. England and Holland were the leading nationalities, with three each in the top 20: Sterling, Harry Kane and Alexander-Arnold for England; Van Dijk, De Jong and Matthijs De Ligt for Holland. They were ahead of, with two each, Argentina (Messi and Sergio Aguero), Portugal (Ronaldo and Bernardo Silva), Brazil (Roberto Firmino and Alisson) and Belgium (Eden Hazard and Kevin De Bruyne).

Jurgen Klopp was the undisputed winner of the Manager award with the highest-ever percentage of votes, in acknowledgement of steering Liverpool

Spectacular...Robert Lewandowski was in impressive goalscoring form

Previous World Player winners

1980s

1982 Paolo Rossi
Juventus & Italy
1983 Zico
Udinese & Brazil
1984 Michel Platini
Juventus & France
1985 Michel Platini
Juventus & France
1986 Diego Maradona
Napoli & Argentina
1987 Ruud Gullit
Milan & Holland
1988 Marco Van Basten
Milan & Holland
1989 Ruud Gullit
Milan & Holland

1990s

1990 Lothar Matthaus
Internazionale & West Germany
1991 Jean-Pierre Papin
Marseille & France
1992 Marco Van Basten
Milan & Holland
1993 Roberto Baggio
Juventus & Italy
1994 Paolo Maldini
Milan & Italy
1995 Gianluca Vialli
Juventus & Italy
1996 Ronaldo
Barcelona & Brazil
1997 Ronaldo
Barcelona/Internazionale & Brazil
1998 Zinedine Zidane
Juventus & France
1999 Rivaldo
Barcelona & Brazil

2000s

2000 Luis Figo
Barcelona/Real Madrid & Portugal
2001 Michael Owen
Liverpool & England
2002 Ronaldo
Internazionale/Real Madrid & Brazil
2003 Pavel Nedved
Juventus & Czech Republic
2004 Ronaldinho
Barcelona & Brazil
2005 Ronaldinho
Barcelona & Brazil
2006 Fabio Cannavaro
Juventus/Real Madrid & Italy
2007 Kaka
Milan & Brazil
2008 Cristiano Ronaldo
Manchester United & Portugal
2009 Lionel Messi
Barcelona & Argentina

2010s

2010 Xavi
Barcelona & Spain
2011 Lionel Messi
Barcelona & Argentina
2012 Lionel Messi
Barcelona & Argentina
2013 Cristiano Ronaldo
Real Madrid & Portugal
2014 Cristiano Ronaldo
Real Madrid & Portuga
2015 Lionel Messi
Barcelona & Argentina
2016 Cristiano Ronaldo
Real Madrid & Portugal
2017 Cristiano Ronaldo
Real Madrid & Portugal
2018 Luka Modric
Real Madrid & Croatia

Success...Jurgen Klopp and his Liverpool side with the Champions League

Liverpool boss Jurgen Klopp was the undisputed winner of the Manager award with the highest-ever percentage of votes

to a sixth European Cup triumph.

Similarly, Liverpool were the overwhelming winners of the World Team award, with votes also cast for Ajax, Manchester City and USA's World Cup-winning women's national side.

● *Full details of how the panel voted are available at www.worldsoccer.com*

Female voice... Megan Rapinoe

Rnk	Name	Pts
WORLD PLAYER OF THE YEAR		
1	Lionel Messi, *Barcelona & Argentina*	613
2	Virgil Van Dijk, *Liverpool & Holland*	602
3	Sadio Mane, *Liverpool & Senegal*	366
4	Cristiano Ronaldo, *Juventus & Portugal*	307
5	Kylian Mbappe, *PSG & France*	216
6	Mohamed Salah, *Liverpool & Egypt*	200
7	Alisson Becker, *Liverpool & Brazil*	154
8	Robert Lewandowski, *Bayern Munich & Poland*	142
9	Frenkie De Jong, *Ajax/Barcelona & Holland*	140
10=	Eden Hazard, *Chelsea/Real Madrid & Belgium*	126
10=	Raheem Sterling, *Manchester City & England*	126
12	Kevin De Bruyne, *Manchester City & Belgium*	92
13	Matthijs De Ligt, *Ajax/Juventus & Holland*	71
14	Harry Kane, *Tottenham H & England*	68
15	Bernardo Silva, *Manchester City & Portugal*	51
16	Son Heung-min, *Tottenham H & S Korea*	48
17	Roberto Firmino, *Liverpool & Brazil*	45
18	Dusan Tadic, *Ajax & Serbia*	31
19	Trent Alexander-Arnold, *Liverpool & England*	28
20	Sergio Aguero, *Manchester City & Argentina*	25
21	Megan Rapinoe, *Reign & United States*	24
22	Marc-Andre Ter Stegen, *Barcelona & Germany*	19
23	Riyad Mahrez, *Manchester City & Algeria*	14
24	Antoine Griezmann, *Atletico Madrid/Barcelona & France*	13
25	Everton Soares, *Gremio & Brazil*	12
26	Ederson, *Manchester City & Brazil*	10
27=	Kalidou Koulibaly, *Napoli & Senegal*	9
27=	Rose Lavelle, *Washington Spirit & United States*	9
27=	Luis Suarez, *Barcelona & Uruguay*	9
30=	Jackie Groenen, *Frankfurt/Manchester Utd & Holland*	8
30=	Bruno Henrique, *Flamengo & Brazil*	8
30=	N'Golo Kante, *Chelsea & France*	8
33=	Christian Eriksen, *Tottenham Hotspur & Denmark*	7
33=	Donny Van de Beck, *Ajax & Holland*	7
33=	Gabriel Barbosa, *Flamengo & Brazil*	7
33=	Sofia Jakobsson, *Montpellier/Tacon & Sweden*	7
37=	Karim Benzema, *Real Madrid & France*	6
37=	Amandine Henry, *Lyon & France*	6
37=	Luka Jovic, *Eintracht Frankfurt/ Real Madrid & Serbia*	6
40=	Akram Afif, *Al Sadd & Qatar*	5
40=	Lucy Bronze, *Lyon & England*	5
40=	Paulo Dybala, *Juventus & Argentina*	5
40=	Hugo Lloris, *Tottenham H & France*	5
40=	Jan Oblak, *Atletico Madrid & Slovenia*	5
44=	Leonardo Bonucci, *Juventus & Italy*	4
44=	Fabinho, *Liverpool & Brazil*	4
44=	Joao Felix, *Porto/Atletico Madrid & Portugal*	4
44=	Aymeric Laporte, *Manchester City & France*	4
44=	Luka Modric, *Real Madrid & Croatia*	4
44=	Neymar, *Paris Saint-Germain & Brazil*	4
44=	Asisat Oshoala, *Barcelona & Nigeria*	4
51=	Ismael Bennacer, *Empoli/Milan & Algeria*	3
51=	Giorgio Chiellini, *Juventus & Italy*	3
51=	Erling Haaland, *Red Bull Salzburg & Norway*	3
51=	Lorenzo Insigne, *Napoli & Italy*	3
51=	Alex Morgan, *Orlando Pride & United States*	3
56=	Barbara Bonansea, *Juventus & Italy*	2
56=	Dani Alves, *Paris Saint-Germain/Sao Paulo & Brazil*	2
56=	Hector Herrera, *Porto/Atletico Madrid & Mexico*	2
56=	Zlatan Ibrahimovic, *LA Galaxy & Sweden*	2
56=	Lucas Moura, *Tottenham Hotspur & Brazil*	2
56=	Marco Reus, *Bor Dortmund & Germany*	2
56=	Andy Robertson, *Liverpool & Scotland*	2
56=	Hakim Ziyech, *Ajax & Morocco*	2
64=	Yui Hasegawa, *Nippon TV Beleza &Japan*	1
64=	Raul Jimenez, *Wolverhampton Wanderers & Mexico*	1
64=	Christian Pulisic, *Borussia Dortmund/Chelsea & United States*	1
64=	Marcus Rashford, *Manchester United & England*	1
64=	Thiago Alcantara, *Bayern Munich & Spain*	1
64=	Georginio Wijnaldum, *Liverpool & Holland*	1
64=	Eran Zahavi, *Guangzhou R&F & Israel*	1
WORLD MANAGER OF THE YEAR		
1	Jurgen Klopp, *(Liverpool)*	67
2	Pep Guardiola, *(Manchester City)*	2
WORLD TEAM OF THE YEAR		
1	*Liverpool*	60
2=	*Ajax*	3
2=	*Manchester City*	3
2=	*USA women*	3

THE VOTING PANEL

Paddy Agnew	*Italy*
Juan Carlos Aguero	*Costa Rica*
Domenic Aquilina	*Malta*
Mamodou Bah	*Gambia*
Sam Beckwith	*Czech Republic*
Giuseppe Bergomi	*Italy*
Nick Bidwell	*England*
Alexander Bobrov	*Russia*
Boris Bogdanov	*Russia*
Carlos Carpio	*Spain*
Gabriel Cazenave	*Paraguay*
Francois Colin	*Belgium*
Sean Creedon	*Rep of Ireland*
Peterjon Cresswell	*Hungary*
Steve Darby	*England*
Martin Del Palacio Langer	*Mexico*
Les Dickens	*Ecuador*
Klaas-Jan Droppert	*Holland*
Christian Eichler	*Germany*
Claudia Ekai	*Kenya*
Adel Ferdowsipour	*Iran*
Mark Gleeson	*South Africa*
Miron Goihman	*Moldova*
Phil Gordon	*Scotland*
Victor Gusev	*Russia*
Skapti Hallgrimsson	*Iceland*
Simon Hill	*Australia*
Jim Holden	*England*
Sasa Ibrulj	*Bosnia-Herzegovina*
Howard Johnson	*France*
Brian Kerr	*Rep of Ireland*
Roy Kitson	*Northern Ireland*
Tom Kundert	*Portugal*
Kimi Kunohara	*Japan*
Samindra Kunti	*Belgium*
Dariusz Kurowski	*Poland*
Sergio Levinsky	*Argentina*
Mehmet Cagri Davran	*Turkey*
Steve Menary	*England*
Glenn Moore	*England*
Rasim Movsumzadeh	*Azerbaijan*
Hassanin Mubarak	*Iraq*
Andres Must	*Estonia*
Gezim Nushi	*Albania*
Oluwashina Okeleji	*Nigeria*
Yazit Ouahib	*Algeria*
Vladimir Novak	*Serbia*
Dejan Panic	*Montenegro*
Rumen Paytashev	*Bulgaria*
Diego Paz	*Honduras*
Maurizio Pizzoferrato	*Italy*
Mike Plastow	*Japan*
Ashok Purohit	*Oman*
Keir Radnedge	*England*
Francesco Repice	*Italy*
Emanuel Rosu	*Romania*
Kereem Ruiz	*Mexico*
Seo Hyung-wook	*South Korea*
Milorad Stojmanovski	*Macedonia*
Manos Staramopoulos	*Greece*
Jacques Sys	*Belgium*
Troels Bager Thogersen	*Denmark*
Clive Tyldesley	*England*
Martin Tyler	*England*
Cees Van Cuilenborg	*Holland*
Lukas Vrablik	*Slovakia*
Wolfgang Winheim	*Austria*
Oleg Zadernovsky	*Ukraine*
Umaid Wasim	*Pakistan*
Carl Worswick	*Colombia*

PLAYER

LIONEL **MESSI**

World Player of the Year

"All you can do is applaud," said Diego Simeone. The Atletico Madrid coach had just seen his team succumb to another Lionel Messi wonder goal and he could not stop himself from showing his appreciation for his fellow Argentinian from the touchline.

Collecting the ball 50 yards out on the right-hand flank in front of the watching Simeone, and with a sea of Atletico shirts in front of him, Messi advanced towards goal, exchanged passes with Luis Suarez and side-footed a fierce low shot into the corner of the net. The impossibly difficult made to look effortlessly simple. It was typically Messi.

If any other player had broken the deadlock in a top-of-the-table clash with an 86th-minute winner they would be feted and their goal endlessly replayed. But for Messi it was just another day at the office, his individual brilliance carrying Barcelona to a 1-0 victory and keeping them on top of La Liga as the campaign headed towards Christmas.

The consistency of his performances makes it easy to run out of superlatives to describe Messi, and the "Greatest of All Time" debate will rage on. But, ultimately, stats and facts will trump emotions and opinions. And nobody in the modern game can match the individual records set by Messi since he made his Barca debut at the age of 17 in October 2004.

Last season he provided more assists and more goals than anyone else, was Europe's top scorer with 36 goals in 34 league games to win another Golden

Silverware...another Liga triumph in 2019

Wonder goal...scoring against Atletico Madrid

Shoe and he was also the Champions League's top scorer.

More recently, his goal against Borussia Dortmund made the German side the 34th different team he has scored against in Europe, beating the record of Cristiano Ronaldo and Raul. A week later he recorded a 35th Liga hat-trick as Barcelona thrashed Real Mallorca 5-2, breaking another record previously held by Ronaldo.

He is the greatest goalscorer in La Liga history, with 431 in 462 games by the middle of December 2019, and he has also contributed the most assists, 173 and counting.

His stats for the 2019 calendar year are also extraordinary: games 54, goals 46, assists 17.

Barcelona coach Ernesto Valverde acknowledges that he has been a witness to history. "You are aware of the privilege you have [by coaching Messi], but sometimes the day-to-day doesn't allow you to enjoy it," he says.

"Over time, you enjoy it more. I'm aware of it. I'm lucky enough to say that I've coached Leo.

"Just like how our elders talk about Di Stefano, we can say that we have been here at the same time as Messi."

Messi turns 33 in June, so talk of retirement is no longer fanciful; it is the uncomfortable reality that has to be addressed. "It seems natural, something normal," says Valverde. "In the end, he's 32 and he's not going to retire tomorrow.

"It's something he doesn't have in his head but it's there. When a player goes past 30 he always thinks about it.

"You have to look at it in a natural way. When the years go by there will come a time he will leave football, but it will not be now."

Messi's current Barcelona contract runs until the summer of 2021, but the reality is that the situation is far more fluid. There is believed to be a clause in the contract that allows him to leave at the end of each season. So he can name his price to stay, or go.

He has talked in the past about a move back to Rosario to end his career in his home town with Newell's Old Boys. But life in Barcelona – where he, his wife Antonetta and their three sons Thiago, Mateo and Ciro – is settled and secure.

After titles at under-20 and under-23 level, success at senior international level remains the glaring omission from Messi's stellar CV. The 2020 Copa America, to be joint-staged by his own country and Colombia, may be his best chance of success.

> **"Just like how our elders talk about Di Stefano, we can say that we have been here at the same time as Messi"**
> *Barcelona coach Ernesto Valverde*

Messi scored the only goal of November's friendly against Brazil in Saudi Arabia following his return to the international fold in the wake of his post-Copa America ban. His claim that the tournament was "fixed for Brazil" earned him a four-game suspension – but it was also an indication of his determination to assume leadership of the national side, where confidence is returning under Lionel Scaloni.

Messi will be 35 when the 2022 World Cup kicks off in Qatar. Will that be a suitable stage for him to bow out on a high?

In the meantime, we can only sit back and marvel at the contribution to the global game of Lionel Andres Messi, 2019 World Player of the Year.

Gavin Hamilton

MANAGER

JURGEN **KLOPP**

World Manager Of The Year

Liverpool's Champions League victory over Tottenham Hotspur at the Estadio Metropolitano in Madrid was particularly sweet for Jurgen Klopp. The former Mainz and Borussia Dortmund coach had finally won a cup Final at the seventh time of asking.

Klopp's reputation as a serial loser is not entirely deserved; his Dortmund side beat Bayern Munich to win the 2012 German Cup. But after that he was a six-time losing finalist: three with Dortmund and three with Liverpool. The defeats included three European showpieces: the 2013 Champions League Final with Bayern at Wembley, the 2016 Europa League Final against Sevilla in Basle, and the 2018 Champions League Final loss to Real Madrid in Kiev.

Of course, "serial loser" would be an unfair tag to apply to Klopp; "serial improver" would be a much more accurate description – especially after his work at Liverpool culminated in a sixth European Cup triumph last May.

Klopp arrived at Liverpool in October 2015 as one of the world's most-wanted coaches, with his pressing tactics having influenced a new generation of Bundesliga coaches. At Mainz, where he spent his entire playing career, he stepped effortlessly from the pitch to the dugout, steering the club to a first-ever promotion. With Dortmund, he turned around the fortunes of a club hit by financial turbulence, taking them to back-to-back Bundesliga titles and that appearance in the 2013 Champions League Final.

> "Serial loser" would be an unfair tag to apply to Klopp; "serial improver" would be a much more accurate description

Klopp's Liverpool have all the tactical hallmarks of his Dortmund side but at Anfield – or rather at the club's Melwood training ground – he has also embraced a commitment to data analytics. That combination of good coaching and clever transfer business has produced spectacular results and allowed Liverpool to successfully challenge Manchester City, their financially-enhanced rivals a few miles down the road.

Fifteen wins in Liverpool's first 16 Premier League games of this season stretched their unbeaten run to 33 matches, the best in the club's history. Under Klopp, they have won 59 per cent of their games, the highest percentage of any manager who has been in charge for 50 games or more. His recent reward was a new five-year contract until 2024.

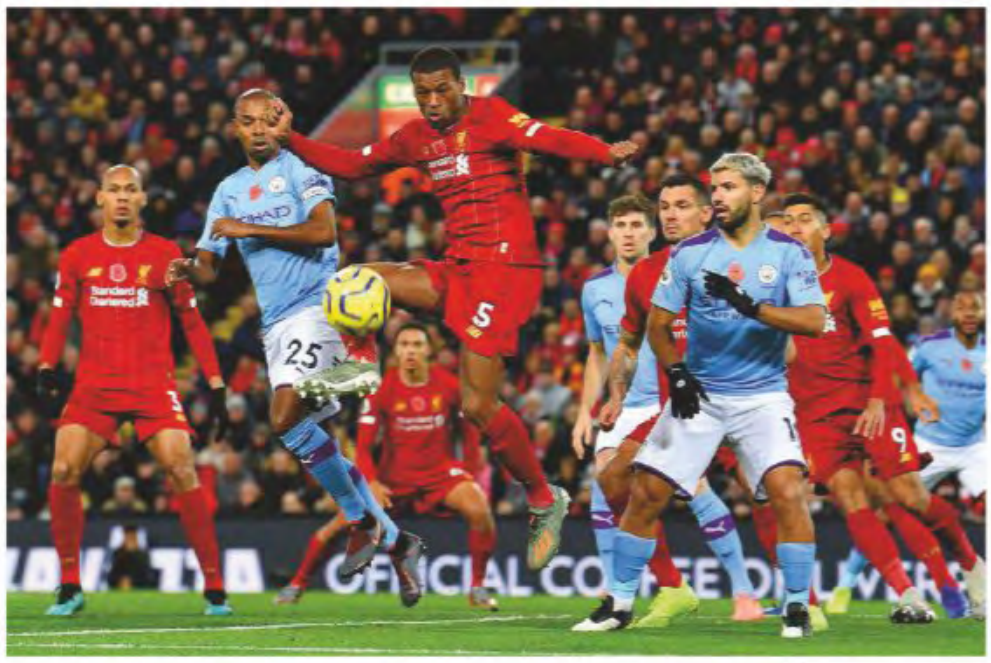
Whether he sees out that new deal remains to be seen. In a recent interview with *Kicker* he acknowledged that at some stage in the future he will take a year out to recharge his batteries, explaining: "If I decide for myself that I can't go on anymore, I'll take a break and in that year I'd have to make a definite decision.

"I have absolute energy, but I have one problem: I can't do 'a little bit'. I can only do 'all or nothing'. But the chances are very high that my energy levels will go up again [after a year's break], and that I can then do the job the way I want to."

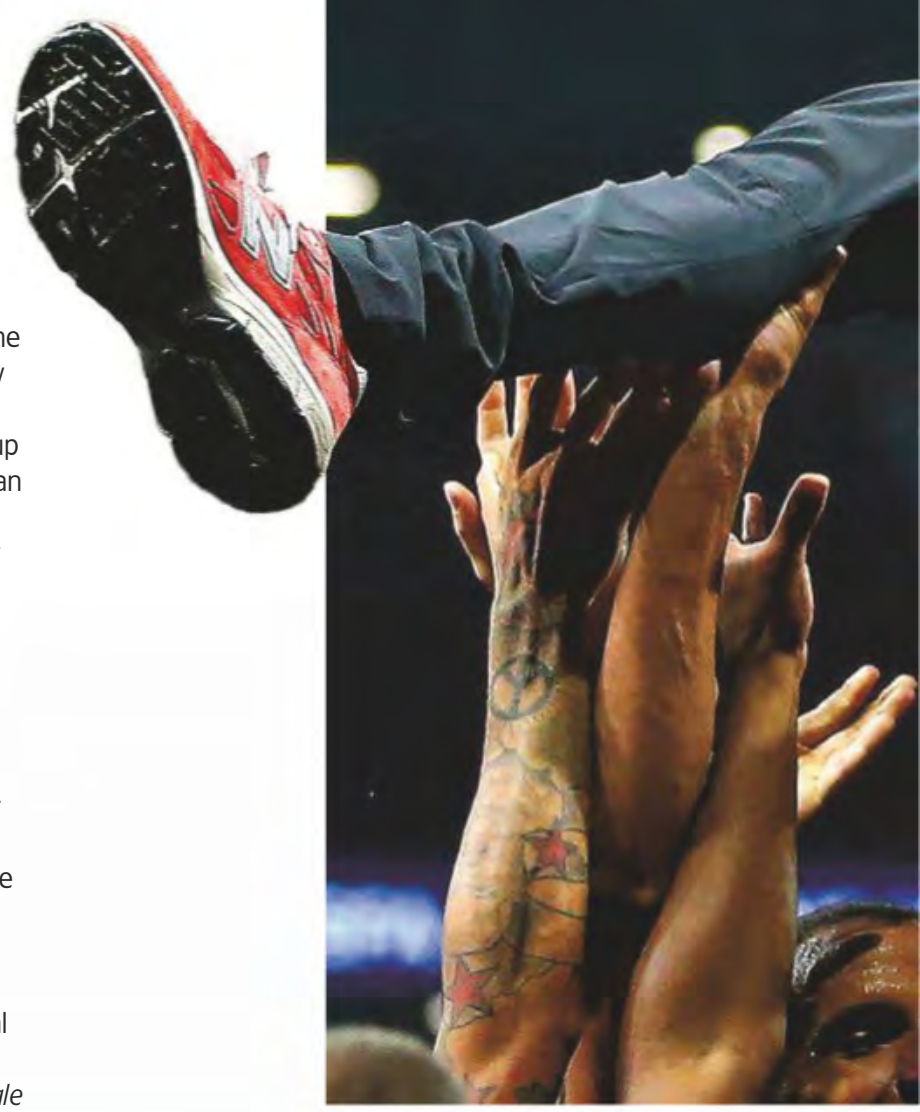
For the time being, everything is rosy on Merseyside. Politically, he presses all the right buttons for Liverpool fans in a proudly socialist city. "I'm on the left, of course," he said. "More left than middle. I believe in the welfare state. I'm not privately insured. I would never vote for a party because they promised to lower the top tax rate."

A return to Germany seems inevitable at some stage, with Bayern Munich and the national team both appealing. But, for the moment, Klopp is relishing the challenge of turning Liverpool into serial winners again.

John Holmesdale



In control...Liverpool (in red) lead Man City this season



PREVIOUS WINNERS

WORLD MANAGER OF THE YEAR

1982 Enzo Bearzot, *Italy*
1983 Sepp Piontek, *Denmark*
1984 Michel Hidalgo, *France*
1985 Terry Venables, *Barcelona*
1986 Guy Thys, *Belgium*
1987 Johan Cruyff, *Ajax*
1988 Rinus Michels, *Holland/Leverkusen*
1989 Arrigo Sacchi, *Milan*
1990 Franz Beckenbauer, *West Germany/Marseille*
1991 Michel Platini, *France*
1992 Richard Moller-Nielsen, *Denmark*
1993 Alex Ferguson, *Manchester United*
1994 Carlos Alberto Parreira, *Brazil*
1995 Louis Van Gaal, *Ajax*
1996 Berti Vogts, *Germany*
1997 Ottmar Hitzfeld, *Borussia Dortmund*
1998 Arsene Wenger, *Arsenal*
1999 Alex Ferguson, *Manchester United*
2000 Dino Zoff, *Italy*
2001 Gerard Houllier, *Liverpool*
2002 Guus Hiddink, *South Korea/PSV*
2003 Carlo Ancelotti, *Milan*
2004 Jose Mourinho, *Porto/Chelsea*
2005 Jose Mourinho, *Chelsea*
2006 Marcello Lippi, *Italy*
2007 Alex Ferguson, *Manchester United*
2008 Alex Ferguson, *Manchester United*
2009 Pep Guardiola, *Barcelona*
2010 Jose Mourinho, *Internazionale/Real Madrid*
2011 Pep Guardiola, *Barcelona*
2012 Vicente Del Bosque, *Spain*
2013 Jupp Heynckes, *Bayern Munich*
2014 Joachim Low, *Germany*
2015 Luis Enrique, *Barcelona*
2016 Claudio Ranieri, *Leicester City*
2017 Zinedine Zidane, *Real Madrid*
2018 Didier Deschamps, *France*

TEAM

LIVERPOOL

World Team of the Year

They do like a comeback on Merseyside. When Liverpool last won the *World Soccer* World Team of the Year award, in 2005, it was on the back of a remarkable fight back from 3-0 down at half-time to beat Milan on penalties in the Champions League Final in Istanbul.

Fourteen years later, a similarly spectacular turnaround helped Liverpool to their sixth European Cup.

In the semi-final first leg against Barcelona they had succumbed to an imperious Lionel Messi, whose individual brilliance probably deserved to be rewarded by a larger margin than the 3-0 scoreline. Yet back at Anfield, and roared on by a capacity crowd hoping for another miracle, Liverpool pulled off the most unlikely of reversals, capped by a winning goal from Divock Origi, who stroked home Trent Alexander-Arnold's improvised corner.

That dramatic victory set up an all-Premier League Final against Tottenham Hotspur at the Estadio Metropolitano in Madrid. On the night, Liverpool's

Triumph...champions of Europe

performance was functional rather than inspirational, but it was in stark contrast to the 2018 Final in Kiev, when Real Madrid had run out 3-1 winners. Then there had been no way back after a first-half injury to talisman Mohamed Salah, whose shoulder was damaged in a tussle with Sergio Ramos, and a howler by keeper Loris Karius which gifted Madrid the opening goal.

Lessons were learned. Brazilian keeper Alisson, signed from Roma for a world-record fee of €75million in the summer of 2018, brought a new resilience to a back line superbly marshalled by Dutch defender Virgil Van Dijk. The exuberant front three of Salah, Sadio Mane and Roberto Firmino continued to give Jurgen Klopp's side the attacking edge but the coach could now call upon new midfield

Homecoming... back on Merseyside

Comeback...Divock Origi's goal stuns Barcelona at Anfield

PREVIOUS WINNERS

1982 *Brazil*
1983 *Hamburg*
1984 *France*
1985 *Everton*
1986 *Argentina*
1987 *Porto*
1988 *Holland*
1989 *Milan*
1990 *West Germany*
1991 *France*
1992 *Denmark*
1993 *Parma*
1994 *Milan*
1995 *Ajax*
1996 *Nigeria*
1997 *Borussia Dortmund*
1998 *France*
1999 *Manchester United*
2000 *France*
2001 *Liverpool*
2002 *Brazil*
2003 *Milan*
2004 *Greece*
2005 *Liverpool*
2006 *Barcelona*
2007 *Iraq*
2008 *Spain*
2009 *Barcelona*
2010 *Spain*
2011 *Barcelona*
2012 *Spain*
2013 *Bayern Munich*
2014 *Germany*
2015 *Barcelona*
2016 *Leicester City*
2017 *Real Madrid*
2018 *France*

additions in Naby Keita and Fabinho.

Klopp's "*gegenpressing*" tactics in midfield have been a major factor in their success, but their most creative players have actually been the full-backs, Andy Robertson and Alexander-Arnold.

In addition to their Champions League success, Klopp's men have been unbeaten in the Premier League since a 2-1 reverse to Manchester City on January 3, 2019. The only other defeats in the calendar year have been the FA Cup to Wolverhampton Wanderers, the League Cup to Chelsea and to Napoli

> In addition to their Champions League success, Klopp's men have been unbeaten in the Premier League since January

in the opening game of this season's Champions League group. The 49 points gained from their opening 17 Premier League matches represent their best-ever start to a league season.

Financially, Liverpool's success has been far from miraculous. They have the seventh-highest club revenue in the world, the £43.8m paid to agents was more than any other Premier League club, while theirs is the league's second-highest wage bill, behind Manchester United.

The expansion of Anfield's capacity to 54,000 has contributed to the financial success, as has the work of research director Ian Graham, whose database of players and team of researchers helped facilitate the purchases of "undervalued" players such as Robertson (Hull City), Salah (Roma) and Fabinho (Monaco), while the sale of Philippe Coutinho, to Barcelona for a substantial profit, enabled big spending on Van Dijk and Alisson.

By the time you read this, Liverpool could well be world club champions to add to their European success. It would be a fitting end to a year in which the club has scaled new heights.

John Holmesdale

CLUB PRESIDENT

ULI **HOENESS**

Bayern Munich overlord retires

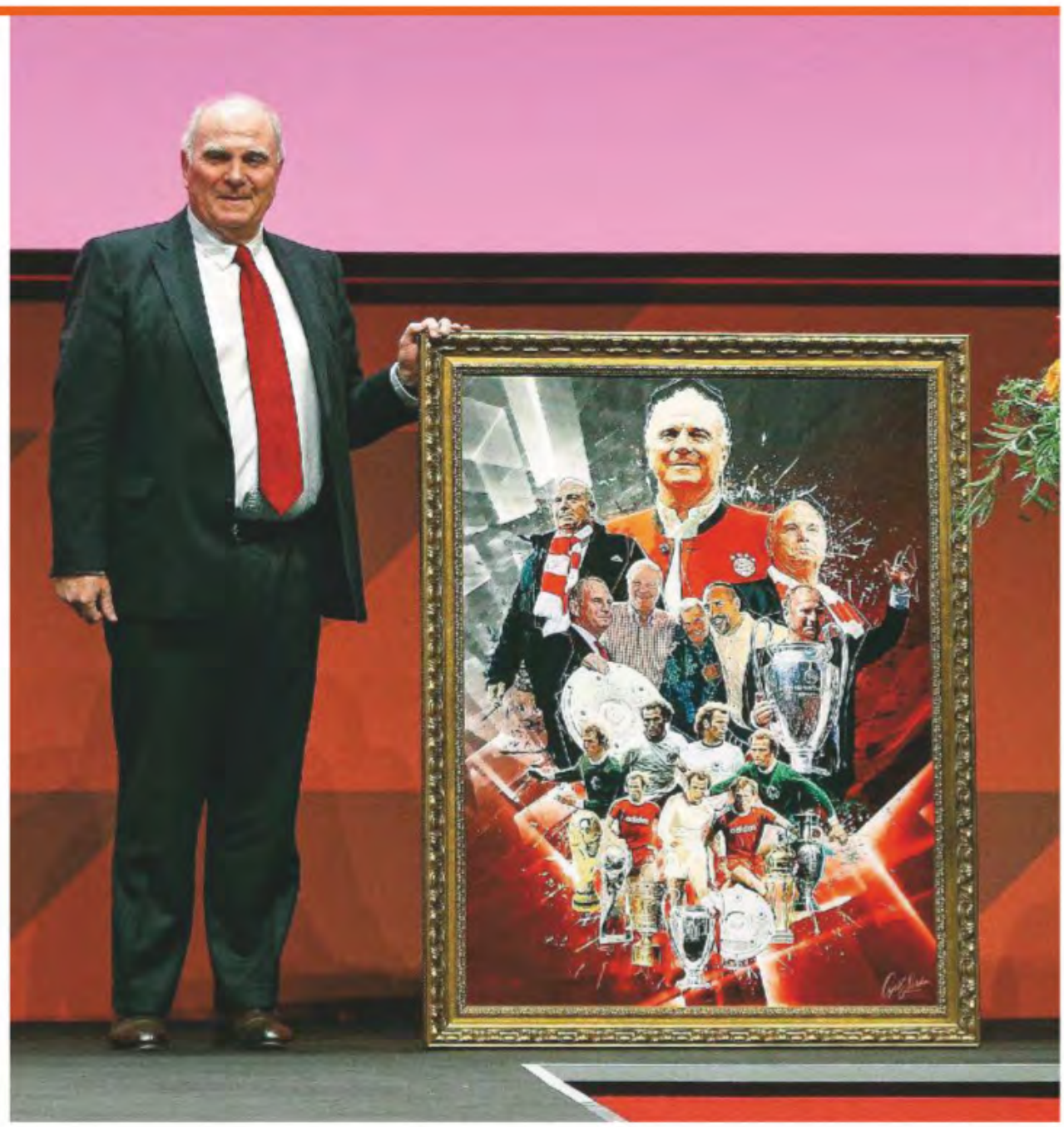
No other figure in the history of Bayern Munich, not even *Deutschland* icon Franz Beckenbauer, has been as loyal to or influential on the Bavarian behemoth as the inimitable Uli Hoeness, who called time on almost half a century of service as world-class attacking midfielder, chief administrator, chairman of the supervisory board and president.

Apart from a short loan spell with Nuremberg at the end of his playing career, Hoeness' professional and personal life was all about Bayern, with eight brilliant seasons in a vintage side that won three European Cups (1974, 1975, 1976), three Bundesliga titles (1972, 1973, 1974) and the Intercontinental Cup (1976). Then, starting at the tender age of 27, followed three decades as a visionary and shrewd general manager/chief executive, after which he became a fervent and hard-hitting presidential voice.

Now 67, he has always been a polarising figure in German football. While Bayern fans loved his total commitment to the cause, supporters of other clubs could not stand him and were appalled by his tendency to buy the chasing pack's best players and his perceived arrogance.

Anyone or anything that posed a threat to Bayern's domestic dominance was sure to be met with a virulent tongue-lashing from Hoeness. A prime example was his full-blooded prime-time TV clash with Christoph Daum in 1989 when he roared at the Cologne coach: "You completely overestimate yourself. For once, you have to look up. It's a ball above you, not a halo."

Some 11 years later, Hoeness would play a key role in preventing Daum taking over as national coach, hinting the latter was a cocaine user and unfit for the job. Daum initially denied the charge, only for a drug-testing lab to prove otherwise. Daum was duly fired by his club, Bayer Leverkusen, and told by the German federation that he would no longer be considered for the post of *Bundestrainer*.



Mr Bayern...with almost half a century of service in Munich

But in 2013 Hoeness had his own come-uppance when sentenced to three-and-a-half years in jail for tax evasion. For a man widely regarded as public enemy number one, it was the most sensational of downfalls.

In the credit column, Hoeness clearly has to go down as the mastermind of the all-conquering modern Bayern. During his 30 years in the corridors of power, his beloved Bayern won no fewer than 24 Bundesliga shields and had two Champions League triumphs (2001, 2013), and it was he who laid the foundations for the club's transformation into a commercial juggernaut.

He was an absolute pioneer in terms of the evolution of football business and the vast majority of his financial calls were to pay off spectacularly, be it the huge emphasis on merchandising, the push for sponsorship cash and pay-TV income, or the opening of Bayern's sumptuous Allianz-Arena in 2002.

The numbers speak for themselves. When he started out as Bayern general manager in 1979, the club's annual turnover was a mere 12million Deutsche Mark and only 20 people were employed in their offices on Sabener Strasse.

These days, the operation is on a wholly grander scale, with a turnover of €750million last season, €52.5m in net profit, a thousand people on the HQ payroll and an organisation valued at €2.8billion.

That, allied to copious amounts of sporting success, is the Hoeness legacy.

Nick Bidwell

During his 30 years in the corridors of power, his beloved Bayern won no fewer than 24 Bundesliga shields and had two Champions League triumphs

PLAYER

TEEMU **PUKKI**

Rejuvenated striker who spearheaded Finland's Euro 2020 qualification

If there was an award for the most significant football reclamation project of 2019, prolific Norwich City and Finland striker Teemu Pukki would have to be number one on the list of nominations.

Once a byword for potential gone bad, the 29-year-old suddenly and unexpectedly cracked the big time; lauded left, right and centre for his almost freakish capacity to pile up the goals for club and country.

Over the past 18 months, the native of Kotka – a picturesque southern Finnish seaside town – has emerged as one of the most in-form finishers around.

And the end-product statistics don't lie. Twenty-nine goals last season as Norwich romped to the Championship title, eight more by early December this term in the Premier League, and on the scoresheet no fewer than 10 times in Finland's qualification for Euro 2020 for what will be their first-ever international finals tournament.

No wonder the local club in Kotka have named their training centre after him. He is Finland's talisman of the moment, the poacher responsible for nearly two-thirds of their goals en route to the European Championship. Many ingredients have contributed to the national side's belated embrace of competitiveness – not least the organisational skills of coach Markku Kanerva, the cohesion and spirit of the squad, and a good mix of different types of player – but Pukki has been the side's magician-in-chief.

A spokesperson for the Finnish church certainly agrees, having recently stated: "Miracles happen through God. And Teemu Pukki."

The striker's current status is in marked contrast to the many tough times in his career. During spells with Sevilla in Spain, Bundesliga side Schalke and Scottish club Celtic, he floundered. In his first 60 senior appearances for Finland he only managed a relatively meagre 10 goals. Voted Finland's best young player at 17, and a full international a year later, he struggled to live up to the hype.

Prolific...for country as well as club

The all-important question is just how did this Finnish caterpillar turn into a butterfly on joining Norwich from Danish side Brondby on a free transfer in the summer of 2018?

Maturity is one factor, so is his much-improved physical presence. At Celtic, for example, he was often knocked off the ball with relative ease. That does not happen these days.

In Spain, Germany and Scotland he was never one of the trusted chosen few, rarely sure of a first-team spot, but having the total faith of Norwich boss Daniel Farke has worked wonders. While some players respond well to the fierce heat of competition for places, Pukki needs to feel wanted.

And he is a perfect fit for the attack-minded philosophy of Farke, who loves a striker that will tirelessly run the channels, is active in combination play, acts the predator in the box and presses the opposition centre-backs. Pukki does all of this and more. A more modest, industrious and unselfish player you could not hope to find.

Norwich, like Finland, know how to bring the best out of him. Mindful that he is not especially strong in the air, the first commandment is to play him in on the floor. His trademark one-touch shooting will do the rest.

Nick Bidwell

> While some players respond well to the fierce heat of competition for places, Pukki needs to feel wanted

PLAYER

ERLING **HAALAND**

Norwegian teen enjoyed a blistering debut in Champions League

Happiness comes in three for the 19-year-old Red Bull Salzburg and Norway centre-forward whose apparently insatiable hunger for goals has made him the hottest of transfer-market properties.

This season, his first full campaign as a Salzburg starter, the teenager has already notched five competitive hat-tricks for his club, including a treble in his inaugural Champions League test: a 6-2 thumping of Genk.

Only two other players – Wayne Rooney of Manchester United and Real Madrid's Raul – managed a Champions League triple at a younger age. And just to prove Genk wasn't a fluke, Haaland continued to amass goals galore, finding the target against Napoli, Liverpool and in the return fixture with the Belgian side.

Phenomenal is the only way to describe his net-busting feats in the last months of 2019. By early December he had scored an amazing 27 goals in 20 matches in all competitions. Should he maintain that sort of effectiveness who knows what his final tally could be. The all-time Austrian league marksmanship record – held by Hans Krankl, who racked up 41 goals in 1977-78 for Rapid Vienna – could even be under threat.

With the benefit of hindsight, Haaland appears to have been limbering up for this season's goal explosion at the summer's Under-20 World Cup, where he struck nine times in Norway's 12-0 demolition of Honduras. The opposition keeper that day, Jose Garcia, must still have nightmares about him.

The son of former Norway international Alf-Inge Haaland – who served Premier League sides Nottingham Forest, Leeds United and Manchester City as a tough-tackling defender or midfield enforcer – Erling has clearly inherited his father's bodily power, intensity and single-mindedness. However, he also boasts a host of added extras. He is much taller than his dad, is far quicker, and is more poised and skilful on the ball. He is a dead-eye finisher too, a speciality which Haaland senior only displayed now and then.

Handful...causing problems for Genk in the Champions League

Former Norway striker turned TV pundit Jan-Aage Fjortoft is convinced that the strapping kid is on his way to the very top, stating: "The boy is a jewel. His mixture of speed, goal instincts and irrepressible will is sensational."

Needless to say, more or less every leading club in Europe has his particulars prominently on file, and even though he has three and a half years left on his current contract it would be no surprise if he were to quit Salzburg at the end of the season.

Every day seems to spawn new rumours as to his future, with Spanish daily *AS* revealing the club have put a €100million price tag on him. Swedish paper *Dagbladet* believes he will join Manchester United, whose manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer was his coach at Norwegian side Molde, while German tabloid *Bild* are linking him to Bundesliga outfits Borussia Dortmund and RB Leipzig – the big Red Bull brother of Salzburg. *Bild* has even claimed he could leave in the January transfer window, when a release clause of just €20m could be triggered.

One thing is for sure. The fight for his signature will be a battle royal, with absolutely no quarter given.

Nick Bidwell

Only two other players – Wayne Rooney of Manchester United and Real Madrid's Raul – managed a Champions League hat-trick at a younger age

COACH

JILL ELLIS

USA's World Cup-winner goes out on a high

When Jill Ellis was a little girl a Victory tour meant going to nearby Portsmouth to see the British warship HMS Victory, on which Lord Nelson died after defeating Napoleon's navy. This year it meant taking her back-to-back Women's World Cup winners on a celebratory tour of the United States, her adopted nation.

The fifth and final match of the Victory Tour was a farewell as Ellis, 53, stepped down from coaching the US team.

After 132 matches (106 wins, seven defeats) and five years on the road, she is taking a break to spend time with her wife, Betsy, and adopted 14-year-old daughter at their home near Miami. Then, she has hinted, she'll take on another challenge, possibly in England.

And there will be no shortage of suitors in the country she left in her early teens when her father, a former Royal Marines commando, began to travel and run soccer schools. Via Singapore and Trinidad & Tobago the family pitched up in Virginia in 1981, and Ellis' horizons changed. Until then she had only played football with her brother and his friends. In the US, girls did play soccer and Ellis enjoyed a successful college career.

But a life in the game was not in her plans and after graduating she took a job writing technical manuals. It paid well but was dull, so when offered a coaching role assisting US World Cup winner April Heinrichs, for a pittance, she seized it.

Ellis progressed through the college system to become, as her father had, an assistant coach to the national team. Then, in 2014, she was asked to take over after a fractious squad forced out Tom Sermanni. Though Olympic champions, the US squad was ageing and faltering. Ellis put Sermanni's rebuilding programme on hold, nursed a few egos, and pulled the group together for the 2015 World Cup in Canada.

The US began the tournament moderately, incurring rising criticism, but Ellis shielded her players, tweaked the formation, and then watched the US go on to crush Japan 5-2 in the Final.

Goodbye...but Jill Ellis will no doubt be back

Criticism resurfaced after a quarter-final exit at the 2016 Olympics, but US Soccer backed Ellis. Aware that the world was catching up, she not only refreshed personnel she also sought to refine the method. While the Americans' superior fitness remained a key strength, more flair and flexibility was required.

Doubts grew as waves of players were trialled but Ellis didn't lose often and by the time France 2019 rolled around the squad was finely honed. Sure-footed and confident, she managed egos – not every coach would have taken a player as feted and strong-minded as Carli Lloyd, while knowing she would not be a starter, and dealt well with media enquiries about extraneous issues such as Megan Rapinoe's views on President Trump and criticism over the players' celebrations at beating Thailand 13-0.

The squad was rotated and tactics adapted. While not always convincing – each knockout tie was a narrow win – the US won all seven matches and were clearly the best team.

Of the XI that began the 2015 Final only five started that of 2019, and with a change from 4-4-2 to 4-3-3 most were in different positions. The best player, Rose Lavelle, epitomised the change in style. Ellis had been vindicated.

She leaves the US national team on a high, but she'll be back.

Glenn Moore

After graduating she took a job writing technical manuals. It paid well but was dull, so when offered a coaching role assisting US World Cup winner April Heinrichs, for a pittance, she seized it

COACH

JORGE **JESUS**

Portuguese roars back to relevance in Brazil

In 2015, with both men enjoying great success, Jorge Jesus was asked whether he or Jose Mourinho was the best Portuguese coach. Jesus gave a typically low-key response, saying: "I'm not only the best Portuguese coach, I'm the best coach in the world. I don't believe anyone knows more about football than me."

He has never hidden his ambition to prove it, either. Yet despite being linked to, among others, Paris Saint-Germain and Milan on the back of resurrecting the fortunes of Portuguese colossus Benfica, that big European job never came. When Jesus took charge of Al Hilal in Saudi Arabia in 2018, at 64 years of age, it appeared that his career was winding down to a nondescript conclusion.

So it was a big surprise when he left before his contract had terminated to take on a familiar task of reawakening a sleeping giant, this time Flamengo in Brazil. But in a country that notoriously looks upon foreign coaches with suspicion, Jesus was not exactly welcomed with open arms.

In a remarkable rant, Fox Sports Brazil journalist Marco Vargas railed against the appointment, saying Jesus was too old, that his successes had been in a league that is worth nothing and concluding that the Portuguese was "too far from our reality to understand our league".

Opposition coaches were also less than complimentary, prompting Jesus to hit back and say: "I'd like to remind my Brazilian colleagues that in Portugal we had a Brazilian in charge of our national team, [Luiz Felipe] Scolari, who was warmly received by all, and many other Brazilian coaches.

"We tried to learn from them. There was none of this verbal aggressiveness that there is towards me here. I don't understand this narrow-mindedness."

Jesus' most powerful retort, though, has been on the pitch. When he arrived, Flamengo's big investment in their squad had not paid dividends and with one third of the season gone they were eight points adrift of top spot. An incredible run of 23 victories, four draws and just two losses later, Jesus had led Fla to the title, winning it by a massive 16-point margin.

Glory...Jorge Jesus won the Brazilian league title and the Copa Libertadores

Yet that wasn't even the best of it. Not satisfied with conquering Brazil, he led Flamengo to Copa Libertadores success – a competition they had only won once before, when a Zico-inspired team lifted the trophy in 1981.

The success of Jesus' appointment was absolute, both in substance and in style. All resistance was thoroughly quashed as local pundits and coaches swapped the criticism for gushing praise.

"We've had some foreign coaches before in Brazil but I don't think any of them compare to him," commented Pele.

Most significantly, Flamengo's players, lined up to shower him with praise. "I've worked with lots of coaches, but what he sees in the game is not normal," said Gabriel Barbosa. "What we did is all down to him. He's the best."

Bruno Henrique, another forward transformed under the Portuguese, said: "Jesus helps players to evolve, I'm living proof of this," while Spaniard Pablo Mari commented: "Jesus changed my life. The team is at this level because of him."

Flamengo have made strong overtures for Jesus to extend his stay in Rio de Janeiro, but it is little surprise he is keeping his cards close to his chest.

His stunning success could at last open the doors to one of Europe's heavyweights and, at 65, Jesus knows this will certainly be his last chance to prove that's where he deserves to be.

Tom Kundert

> In a country that notoriously looks upon foreign coaches with suspicion, Jesus was not exactly welcomed with open arms

PLAYER

ISMAEL BENNACER

Player of the tournament as Algeria won the Africa Cup of Nations

The past year has been an enjoyable one for players who were let go by Arsenal. Serge Gnabry established himself as a key man for Bayern Munich and Germany; Carlos Vela was voted the most valuable player in MLS following his performances for Los Angeles; and Chuba Akpom is thriving at PAOK, winning the Greek league and cup double.

To that list, the name of Ismael Bennacer can be added. The 22-year-old midfielder was the player of the tournament as Algeria won the Africa Cup of Nations in Egypt. He then returned to Europe to complete a high-profile move to Milan from Empoli. Arsenal, who scouted and signed him at 18, retained the right to re-sign him via a clause in his Empoli contract, but they declined to match Milan's £14.4m offer.

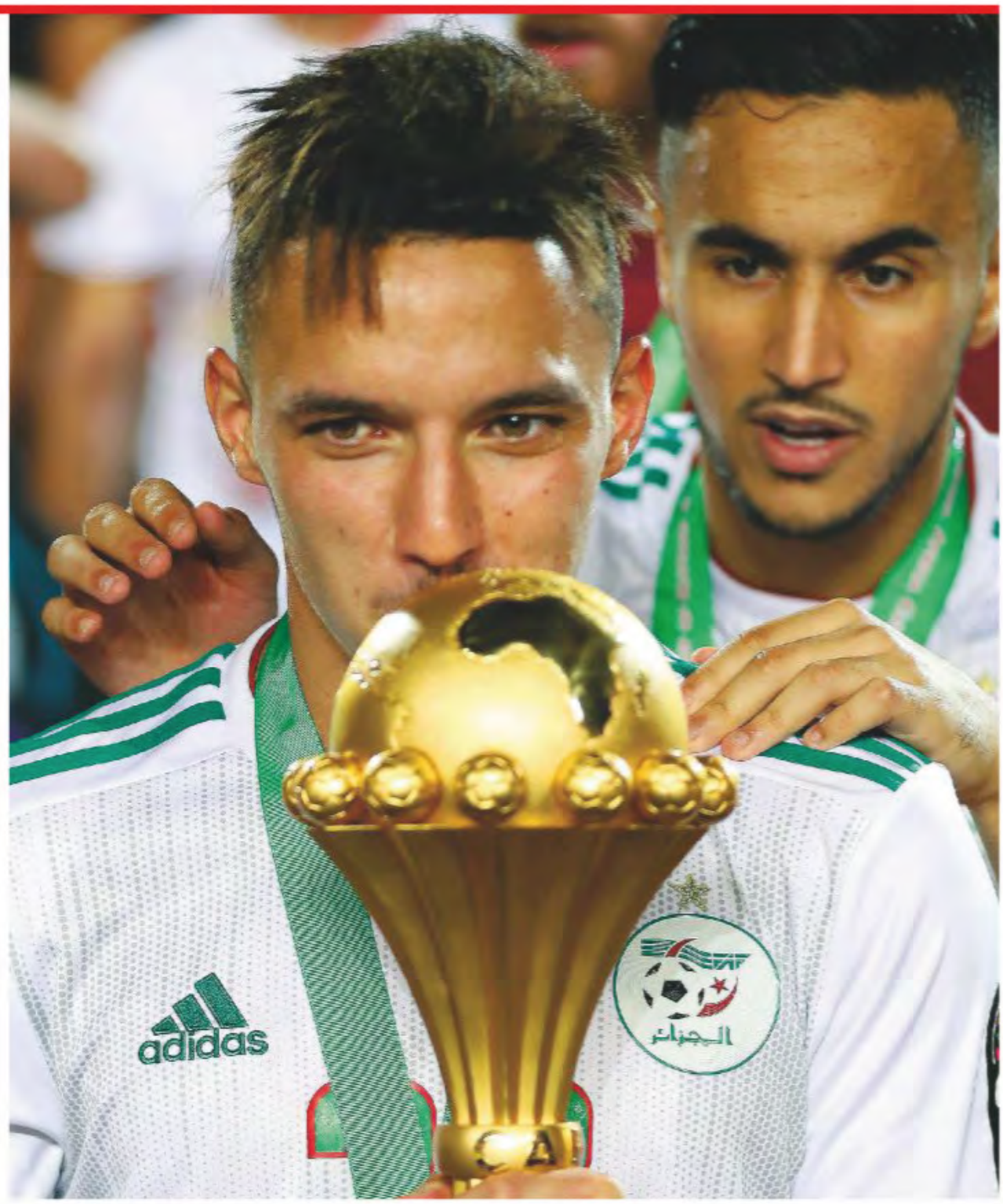
Born in Arles in southern France to an Algerian mother and Moroccan father, Bennacer represented France at youth level before joining the growing band of players who have switched their senior allegiances to Algeria.

He made one appearance in England for Arsenal, as a sub in a League Cup win over Sheffield Wednesday in 2015, before being sent on loan to Tours, who were then in France's Ligue 2, before being allowed to leave to join Empoli in 2017.

At the Cup of Nations, he helped Algeria to their first title in 29 years. He was the tournament's joint-top assist provider and his passes included one for Baghdad Bounedjah's winning goal in the Final against Senegal. In addition to being named player of the tournament he was also voted the best young player.

He was one of 10 players to make the shortlist for CAF's African Footballer of the Year award, alongside favourite Sadio Mane of Liverpool and Senegal.

Bennacer has endured a steep learning curve at Milan, where their poor start to the season led to the sacking of coach Marco Giampaolo. But under Giampaolo's replacement, Stefano Piolo, the Algerian has emerged as the key midfield pivot, despite a poor disciplinary record – seven yellow cards in 10 Serie A appearances – which has already resulted in a suspension.



Shortlist...Ismael Bennacer was nominated as CAF Player of the Year

La Gazzetta dello Sport commented: "The midfielder was the protagonist of Algeria's victory in the summer. Today he is also the master of the *Rossoneri* midfield; he has no rivals...he is the master of his role."

Players of African heritage have had a tough time in Serie A over the past year, with the authorities reluctant to take action to punish supporters engaging in regular incidents of racial abuse.

But Ismael Bennacer is growing into his role, citing Andrea Pirlo as his role model. "Boban [Milan's chief football officer] always reminds me of him.

"He says to me: 'Look how Pirlo played. He wasn't very fast but he knew where the ball went and where his team-mates were. His position was always perfect.' Now I'm studying it in videos."

Arsenal have retained a 30 per cent sell-on clause for any future transfer. That could prove to be a tidy piece of business for one that got away.

John Holmesdale

> "Today he is also the master of the *Rossoneri* midfield; he has no rivals...he is the master of his role"
>
> ***La Gazzetta dello Sport* on Bennacer**

PLAYER

DAVID **VILLA**

Spain's all-time top goalscorer retires

"I prefer to leave football before football leaves me," David Villa told a press conference to announce his retirement from football at the age of 38. "I've been thinking for several years, when you reach 33, 34 or 35, the moment can arrive at any time in a game, in training or with an injury."

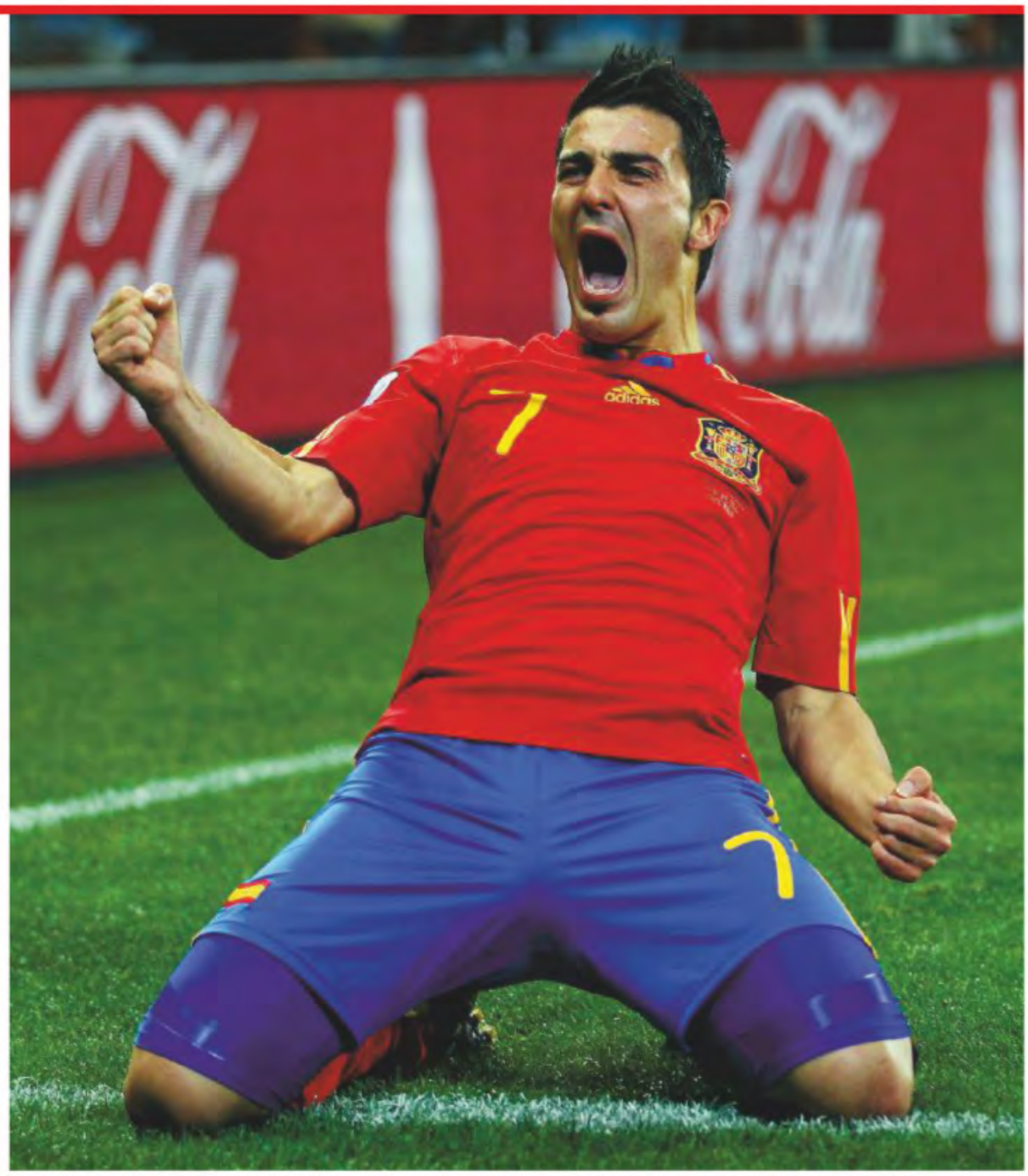
He ended his career as Spain's all-time top scorer, with 59 goals in 98 international appearances. In a club career spanning two decades he played 764 games, scoring a staggering 381 goals for La Liga clubs Sporting Gijon, Zaragoza, Valencia, Barcelona and Atletico Madrid, followed by spells in Australia (Melbourne City), USA (New York City) and Japan (Vissel Kobe).

Villa played what he thought was his last Spain game against Australia at the 2014 World Cup, when the holders exited the tournament at the group stage. But in 2017, having decamped to MLS, he was recalled to the national side by Julen Lopetegui for one final game, in the 2018 World Cup qualifiers.

His form in four seasons at New York City – 80 goals in 126 games – was a reminder of just how prolific he has been. Though never mentioned in the same breath as World Cup-winning team-mates Xavi and Andres Iniesta, a brief look at the strikers that Spain have tried since his departure is proof of his brilliance. The likes of Fernando Llorente, Michu, Alvaro Negredo, Roberto Soldado, Paco Alcacer, Iago Aspas, Aritz Aduriz, Diego Costa and Alvaro Morata have all been used, but none have come closing to matching his strike-rate.

"I have had a very good journey and above all I have been happy," he says. "I have had good experiences on and off the field. I have been a very lucky guy and I have experienced great things through football."

"I would like to have won more titles. Leagues, Champions Leagues with Atletico Madrid, or win with Valencia a more important title than that Copa del Rey. Or to have helped Sporting Gijon to [get promoted] to La Liga. In every club you go through there is always something left to do.



Prolific...David Villa scored 59 goals for his country

"I would like to have played in the Premier League as well. But I made my decisions and it really wouldn't be fair to complain that I missed out on something when I had such a complete career.

"I have been very lucky for what I experienced. I wouldn't change anything."

A final season in the J.League was spent alongside Iniesta at Vissel Kobe. Though Vissel did not challenge for honours, Villa scored in his final league match, a penalty in a 4-1 win over Jubilo Iwata, and celebrated with his family – wife Patricia, daughters Zaida and Olaya, and son Luca – on the touchline.

He now heads back to the USA, where he is the lead investor in Queensboro FC, who will join the USL Championship in 2021. "We are very excited about this team in the Queens' neighbourhood, that will give us a lot of joy," he says.

"In addition, we will work in the academies to give opportunities to children and let them have experiences like I had in football when I was a child, when I fought to be a football player. Now, with more time, I will be able to visit all the academies we have in the world and open new locations in other countries."

John Holmesdale

> "I have had a very good journey and above all I have been happy. I have had good experiences on and off the field. I have been a very lucky guy"

PLAYER

AKRAM **AFIF**

Qatari voted Asian Player of the Year

While the Copa America, Africa Cup of Nations and Women's World Cup may have been the headline-grabbing international events of 2019, the most significant achievement of the year was, arguably, Qatar's Asian Cup victory in United Arab Emirates.

The tiny nation that is preparing to host the 2022 World Cup won the trophy for the first time with a young team that has made significant progress under Spanish coach Felix Sanchez Bas. In the course of the tournament they scored 19 goals and conceded just one, with Asian powerhouses such as Saudi Arabia, South Korea and, in the Final, Japan, all beaten.

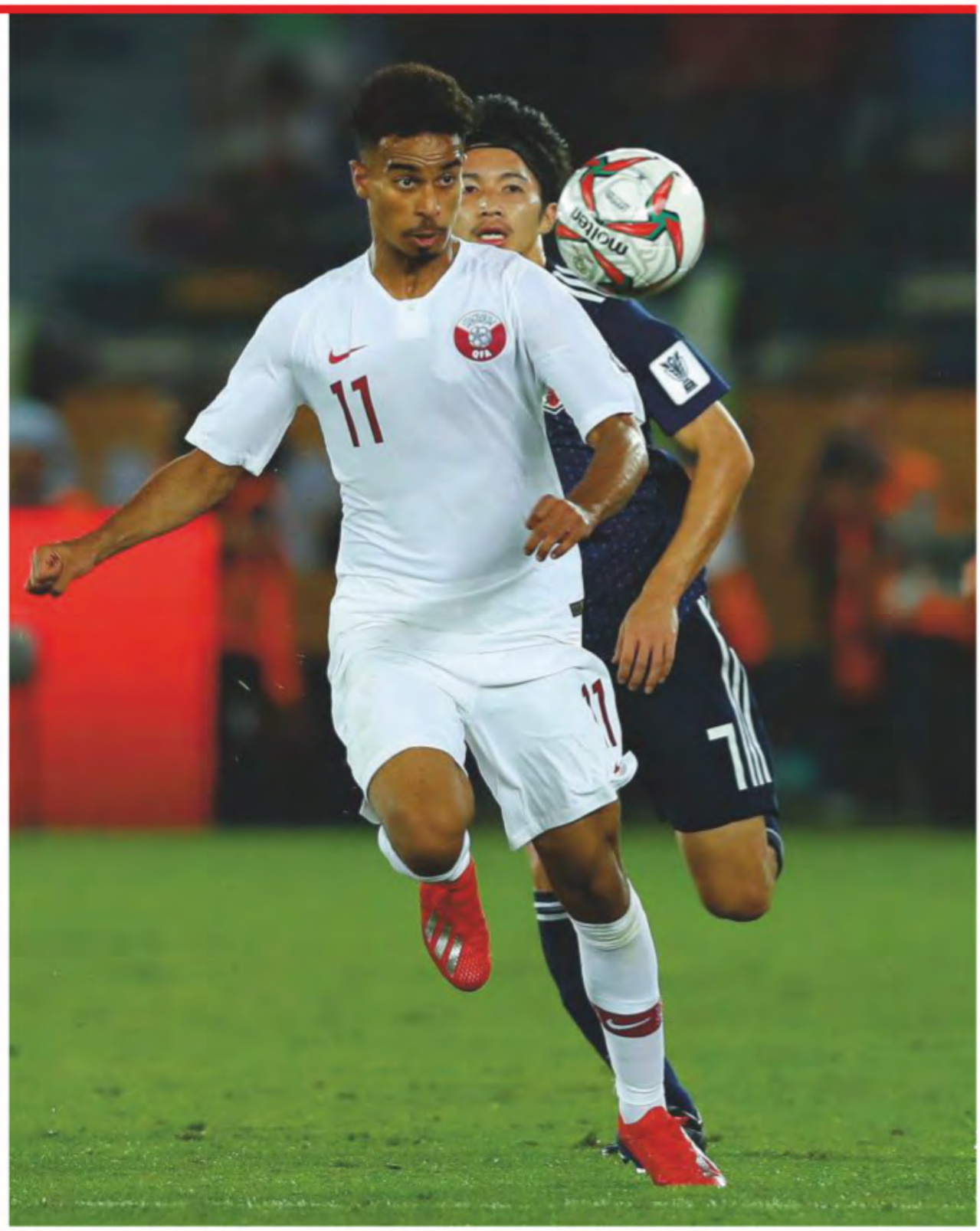
Sanchez Bas had spent years working with various youth teams at the Aspire Academy in Doha and knew exactly what his squad, almost half of whom were 22 or under, were capable of.

Striker Almoez Ali took the spotlight when he scored with a spectacular overhead kick in the Final for his record ninth goal of the tournament, but it was his team-mate Afif who was the man of the match. And in December Afif was also named the continent's Footballer of the Year by the AFC.

Afif provided 10 assists in seven games during the Asian Cup and also played a starring role in Al Sadd's run to the Asian Champions League semi-finals. The club, who are coached by former Barcelona and Spain midfielder Xavi, won the 2019 Qatar Stars League, with Afif contributing 26 goals in 22 appearances.

Afif comes from a footballing family. His father Hassan, was born in Tanzania of Somali heritage and moved to Qatar to play for Al Ittihad, while his elder brother Ali has made more than 60 appearances for the Qatar national side. The Doha-born 23-year-old is a product of the Aspire academy and spent time at Eupen, the Belgian feeder club financed by the Qataris, before becoming the first Qatari to join a Liga club when he moved to Villarreal in 2016.

The forward saw little action in Spain, apart from a few games on loan at lower-league Sporting Gijon, and since 2018 he has been back on loan at Al Sadd, where he has thrived.



Too good...Akram Afif gets away from Takehiro Tomiyasu in the Asian Cup Final

Xavi was quick to pay tribute to Afif's AFC award. "It's well deserved," said the Spaniard. "He was making the difference in the national team and with us, Al Sadd, until the semi-finals of the Champions League. It was a pity that we couldn't reach the Final but it's a pleasure to coach him. He's an unbelievable talent, a big player, so I'm very happy for him."

According to Xavi, the future is bright for Afif and he adds: "There are no limits for him. I've told him many times he's an amazing player, he has many capacities to play football. He's a talent, so he can play everywhere.

"But it depends on him: his mentality, his ambition, because he has everything to play football.

"Obviously he's one of the best players in the national team. This is an amazing generation that Qatar have, they will compete well in 2022."

John Holmesdale

> "It's a pleasure to coach him. He's an unbelievable talent, a big player"
> **Former Spain midfielder Xavi**

ADMINISTRATOR

VASSILIOS **SKOURIS**

Greek lawyer enforcing FIFA's new ethics code

Steady...Skouris

The omens were not good for Vassilios Skouris when he was appointed president of the adjudicatory chamber of FIFA's ethics committee. Skouris, from Greece, was handed an investigatory partner in Maria Claudia Rojas from Colombia, who was known to possess limited English, the *lingua franca* of international sports law.

Not only that but Skouris and Rojas had been parachuted into the Swiss-centred FIFA legal matrix in place of the two men who had rid world football of the hitherto all-powerful president Sepp Blatter and his ally-turned-challenger Michel Platini, head of the world game's richest region in Europe's UEFA.

But almost three years after the Mexico City congress at which Gianni Infantino had changed the ethics guard, 71-year-old Skouris is now gaining respect for his undertaking of this peculiar role.

Commenting on the appointments of Skouris and Rojas, FIFA said: "These individuals have been chosen because they are recognised, high-profile experts in their respective fields. Moreover, they better reflect the geographic and gender diversity that must be a part of an international organisation like FIFA."

The ousted pair – German judge Hans-Joachim Eckert and Swiss lawyer Cornel Borbely – were not impressed. Borbely warned that hundreds of cases would be frozen while the newcomers settled in, arguing: "This is a huge setback. The reform process has at least stepped backwards for several years."

Not surprisingly, Skouris and Rojas made a slow start. Finally, seven months after their appointment came the first evidence of major intent: a life ban on Brazilian federation president and former FIFA ExCo member Marco Polo del Nero.

The Del Nero case was one of several dozen arising out of the FIFAGate scandal. Separately Skouris and Rojas had to sweep up the disciplinary debris left over from the South African match-fix scandal on the eve of the 2010 World Cup hosting. Next came a steady stream of corruption cases involving senior CAF and national FA officials.

Skouris and Rojas have been fortunate, up to a point. The South African cases focused on the activities of the notorious fixer Wilson Raj Perumal. Much of the investigatory groundwork had been undertaken by former FIFA security director Chris Eaton. Rojas and Skouris had to do little more, in comparative terms, than finish the job.

Picking up the FIFAGate cases has involved extensive work but, here again, Skouris and Rojas have fallen on their feet. Firstly, much of the condemnatory evidence was gleaned from the New York court cases; secondly, Rojas understood the Hispano/American language and culture of most of the guilty men.

Beyond that, Skouris and Rojas have raised the bar set by Borbely and Eckert.

They have worked steadily through the schedule and have another 16 months in their jobs. That timescale will present more FIFAGate cases, the likely fallout from the current chaos within the African confederation and more match-fixing.

For many years the phrase "FIFA ethics" has been considered an oxymoron, a contradiction in terms. How long that remains the case depends on a Greek bearing law books.

Keir Radnedge

Skouris and Rojas have another 16 months in their jobs. That timescale will present more FIFAGate cases, the likely fallout from the current chaos within the African confederation and more match-fixing

OBITUARIES

FAREWELL TO...

Emiliano Sala
Nantes' Argentinian striker, signed by Cardiff City, who died when a plane carrying him to Wales crashed into the sea. Aged 28.

Fernando Ricksen
Rangers and Holland defender, who died after a long and public battle with motor neurone disease. Aged 43.

Gordon Banks
England's 1966 World Cup-winning goalkeeper. Aged 81.

Nicolas Leoz
Paraguayan, former president of South American confederation CONMEBOL, whose career ended in disgrace after he was indicted in the FIFA corruption scandal. Aged 90.

Phil Masinga
South Africa and Leeds United striker. Aged 49.

Jose Luis Brown
Argentina defender who scored the opening goal for his country when they won the 1986 World Cup Final. Aged 62

Lisbon Lion...Celtic's Billy McNeill

Eric Harrison
Coach of the Manchester United youth team who mentored the likes of David Beckham, Gary and Phil Neville, Paul Scholes and Nicky Butt. Aged 81.

Peter Mikkelsen
Danish international referee. Aged 58.

Jose Antonio Reyes
Spanish winger, who won trophies with Sevilla, Arsenal, Real Madrid, Atletico Madrid and Benfica. Aged 35, following a car crash.

Lennart Johansson
Swede who was FIFA president for 19 years, from 1990 until 2009, when he was finally beaten by Michel Platini. Aged 89.

Justin Edinburgh
Tottenham Hotspur defender who was manager of Leyton Orient when he went into cardiac arrest, aged 49, and died five days later.

Billy McNeill
Celtic's 1967 European Cup-winning captain who made a record 822 appearances for the club and twice managed the club. Aged 79.

Stevie Chalmers
Member of Celtic's 1967 European Cup-winning side. Age 83.

Tragic... Emiliano Sala

Tommy Smith
Liverpool captain and centre-back who scored in the 1977 European Cup Final. Aged 74.

Robert Waseige
Belgian coach who managed the national side when they co-hosted Euro 2000 and took them to the knockout stage of the 2002 World Cup. Aged 79.

Junior Agogo
Nottingham Forest and Sheffield Wednesday striker who was a surprise hero for Ghana at the 2008 African Cup of Nations. Aged 40.

Rudi Gutendorf
German coach who was in charge of a world-record 55 teams in 32 countries across five continents. Aged 93.

Promise Isaac
Captain of the Nigeria side that lost to Argentina in the 2008 Olympic Games gold medal match. Aged 31.

In safe hands...England goalkeeper Gordon Banks and skipper Bobby Moore hold aloft the World Cup in 1966 at Wembley

The BIG stories of 2020

...before they happen

We look at some of the key questions facing the global game in the coming months

1 WILL THE PREMIER LEAGUE SORT OUT VAR?

The Premier League's use of VAR has been beset by problems since its introduction at the start of the season. Fans have been left confused by the lack of communication in stadiums, while the refusal of on-pitch officials to consult pitchside monitors has been widely criticised.

Arsene Wenger, in one of his first interventions as FIFA's Chief of Global Football Development, called on Premier League officials to use pitchside monitors and use stadium screens to explain their decision in greater detail. But a problem for the Premier League is that two of its biggest stadiums, Old Trafford and Anfield, do not have in-stadium screens.

February's meeting of the International Board will consider "the growing demand for more immediate information about the referee's final decisions after a VAR review". Members will look at "different communication options" with fans in the stadium and television viewers.

Confusion...fans want a better idea of what's going on

2 WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO FLORENTINO PEREZ'S PLAN FOR A WORLD LEAGUE?

While FIFA president Gianni Infantino presses ahead with his plans for an expanded Club World Cup, private equity firm CVC Capital Partners are thought to be in talks with Real Madrid boss Perez over an alternative global competition.

It has been reported that CVC have met with Perez, who is also president of the newly formed World Club Football Association (WFCA), about a 40-team competition split across two leagues.

Eight of those teams could include the founding members of the WFCA.

Golden boy...Neymar (centre) with his medal from 2016

Surprise...Jose Mourinho

4 IS JOSE MOURINHO YESTERDAY'S MAN?

Tottenham Hotspur sprung a major surprise at the end of 2019 with their appointment of the Portuguese manager the day after they sacked Mauricio Pochettino. On paper, Spurs and Mourinho look an awkward fit – a club with a long-term outlook hiring a man famed for his short-term solutions – which prompted speculation that it could all end in tears.

Initial results were positive for Mourinho – with goal-heavy wins over West Ham United, Olympiakos and Bournemouth before a grounding defeat to Manchester United at Old Trafford – but Tottenham supporters have yet to be won over.

The current Spurs squad is in need of renewal and their business in the January transfer window will go some way to determining whether Mourinho can re-invent himself at his third Premier League club.

In demand ...Mauricio Pochettino

Talks...Florentino Perez

3 WILL BRAZIL GET THE CHANCE TO DEFEND THEIR OLYMPIC GOLD MEDAL?

Brazil won their first Olympic title four years ago, on home soil in Rio de Janeiro, but they have yet to qualify for next summer's Games.

Colombia will host the South American qualifiers in January and February, with Brazil well aware that their underage sides failed to make the world under-17 and under-20 finals in 2019 and only competed – and eventually won – the under-17 world title because they were parachuted in as hosts, replacing Peru.

Only two South American sides will qualify for the Tokyo Olympics.

5 WHERE WILL MAURICIO POCHETTINO END UP?

After being dismissed by Tottenham, the Argentinian returned home to Rosario for a holiday, safe in the knowledge that he will not be short of offers in 2020.

In the past, Pochettino has been considered by both Real Madrid and Manchester United, while it is highly likely there will be a vacancy at Bayern Munich in the summer.

But Arsenal, looking to recruit a high-profile replacement for the recently sacked Unai Emery, are not expected to be among the clubs pursuing an interest in Pochettino.

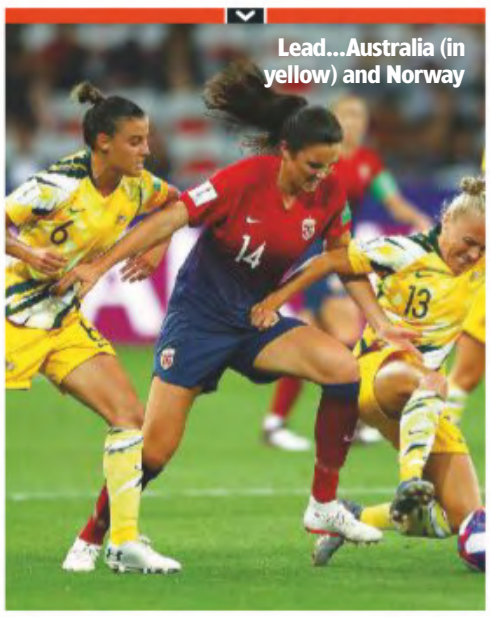
Controversy... Michel Platini

6 WHERE NEXT FOR MICHEL PLATINI?

The global football ban on the former UEFA president ended in October but he has already found himself caught up in further controversy.

In December it was announced that the French authorities have opened a judicial enquiry into the country's support for the awarding of the 2022 World Cup to Qatar.

Last summer Platini was questioned about a 2010 lunch at the Elysee Palace in Paris involving himself, the then-state president Nicolas Sarkozy and the Qatari crown prince.


Lead...Australia (in yellow) and Norway

7 HOW MANY OTHER COUNTRIES WILL FOLLOW AUSTRALIA'S LEAD AND GIVE EQUAL PAY TO WOMEN'S NATIONAL TEAMS?

In November, Football Federation Australia and the players' union announced an historic new four-year collective-bargaining agreement that will close the pay gap between the Matildas and the Socceroos.

However, other countries have yet to follow suit.

In the USA, the bitter dispute between the federation and the women's national-team dispute is ongoing, while Europe's top player, Ada Hegerberg of Norway, continues to boycott her national side in protest at the disparity in pay between the men's and women's national teams.

8 CAN INTER SEE OFF JUVENTUS IN A TIGHT SERIE A TITLE RACE?

Under Antonio Conte, Internazionale enjoyed their best-ever start to a Serie A campaign, winning 12 of their first 15 games and edging ahead of champions Juventus going in the run-up to Christmas.

Inter were last champions in 2010.

Absent...Roman Abramovich

Title challenge...Inter boss Antonio Conte and Romelu Lukaku

9 WILL ROMAN ABRAMOVICH BE SEEN AT STAMFORD BRIDGE AGAIN?

The Russian billionaire, who is no longer resident in London following a visa dispute, pulled the plug on plans for a new stadium for Chelsea.

As a result, speculation persists that he is looking for a buyer for a club that he bought in 2003.

Target... Jadon Sancho

10 WILL JADON SANCHO LEAVE DORTMUND IN JANUARY?

Relations between England winger Sancho and the powers-that-be at Borussia Dortmund have deteriorated this autumn, with the club angry at the player's poor time-keeping, which included a late return from international duty.

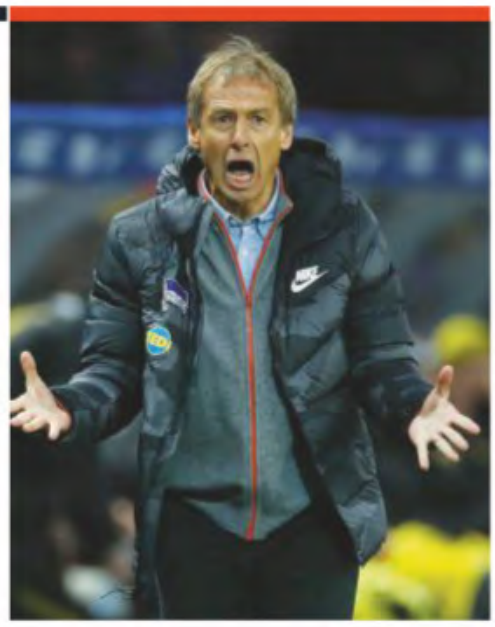
There is a feeling that Dortmund will cash in on Sancho in the summer. But an earlier departure could be on the cards for the 19-year-old, especially with Chelsea likely to return to January's transfer market with gusto following the ending of their transfer embargo.

11 HOW WILL JURGEN KLINSMANN FARE AT HERTHA BERLIN?

A decade after his last coaching job in Germany – a dismal 10-month spell in charge of Bayern Munich – ex-*Nationalmannschaft* boss Klinsmann is back.

Brought in to replace Ante Covic, he is only scheduled to lead Hertha until the end of season. But who knows what will happen if he turns out to be a roaring success in the capital.

New Hertha investor Lars Windhorst wants to transform the club into a real big-city outfit, one which can go toe-to-toe with the continental big boys.



Opportunity...Jurgen Klinsmann

Improved... Nemanja Radonjic

12 WILL THE VILLAS-BOAS REVIVAL AT MARSEILLE CONTINUE?

Life is never dull in Marseille and the Portuguese coach is quietly turning OM into the strongest Ligue 1 challengers to Paris Saint-Germain this season.

In December, a 3-1 win over Bordeaux, another revived team, confirmed their place in second behind leaders and defending champions PSG.

Villas-Boas has improved a team that is no longer dependent on star names such as Kevin Strootman and Dimitri Payet, getting the best from the previously under-performing Nemanja Radonjic and Jordan Amavi.

13 CAN GLADBACH HOLD OFF THE CHALLENGE FROM BAYERN AND OTHERS?

Marco Rose's Borussia Monchengladbach were the outstanding team during the first half of this Bundesliga campaign and their impressive run of form culminated in a dramatic 2-1 victory at home to Bayern Munich at the start of December.

Algerian international Ramy Bensebaini scored the winner at Borussia-Park in a come-from-behind victory that left the defending champions down in seventh place and seven points adrift of table-toppers Gladbach.

With their all-action high-pressing tactics, Rose's young side have been the surprise package of a fascinating league campaign that was wide open at the midway stage.

Gladbach's defeat of Bayern may have cemented their place in pole position, but Julian Nagelsmann's RB Leipzig, Borussia Dortmund and David Wagner's Schalke will all fancy their chances of topping the table over the coming months.

Winner...Ramy Bensebaini celebrates against Bayern

Joint venture...the draw for the 2020 Copa

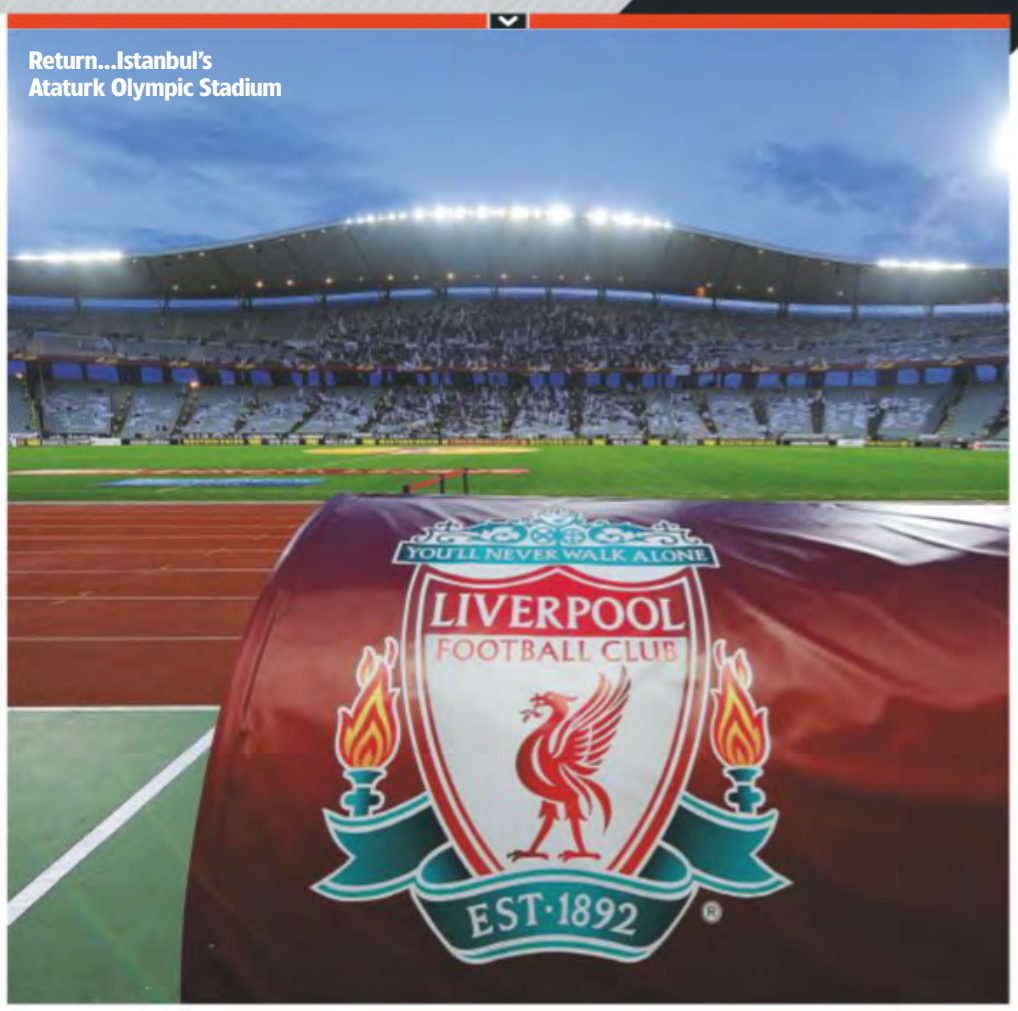
14 WHO WILL WIN THE COPA AMERICA?

Despite being at opposite ends of South America, Argentina and Colombia will jointly stage the 2020 finals which, in a change to the usual three-group format, will be played in two groups of six, with one group in each host country.

Australia, making their debut, and Qatar are the guest nations.

Argentina will play Chile in the opening match on June 12. Both Argentina and Colombia will host two quarter-finals and a semi each, while the Final will be played in Barranquilla, Colombia, on July 12.

Arquitectonica



Return...Istanbul's Ataturk Olympic Stadium

16 CAN LIVERPOOL RETURN TO ISTANBUL?

The 2020 Champions League Final will be played at Istanbul's Ataturk Olympic Stadium, scene of Liverpool's triumph over Milan in 2005, when they recovered from 3-0 down at half-time to stage a remarkable against-the-odds victory.

But whereas in 2005 Liverpool reached the Final having started out in the third qualifying round, 15 years later they enter the competition's knockout phase as defending European champions and one of the clear favourites.

Extension...Pep Guardiola

17 WILL GUARDIOLA SEE OUT HIS CONTRACT AT MAN CITY?

The Spaniard signed a contract extension in June 2016, keeping him at Manchester City until the end of the 2020-21 season. If he stays at City into the final, fifth year of his contract he will have been there for longer than his time at Barcelona (2008-2012) and Bayern Munich (2013-16).

Future...Miami Freedom Park

15 WHO WILL MLS DEBUTANTS INTER MIAMI HIRE?

The David Beckham-fronted Miami franchise will make its MLS debut in March, seven years after plans were first announced to launch a club in the metropolitan area in which Miami Fusion folded in 2001.

Having been disrupted in their search for a stadium, Inter Miami will play their opening games in Fort Lauderdale until a proposed move to a purpose-built 25,000-capacity arena, to be known as Miami Freedom Park, in 2022.

Beckham is a co-owner along with Bolivian tech entrepreneur Marcelo Claure, and the team will debut in the 25th MLS season, along with Nashville, which will take the number of Major League Soccer teams to 26.

18 HOW WILL FIFA REFORM CAF?

A FIFA task force, led by secretary-general Fatma Samoura, took over the running of the Confederation of African Football following allegations of corruption and malpractice.

It remains to be seen what will happen to former CAF staff, including Amr Fahmy, who was sacked as general-secretary after raising concerns about corruption and is now planning to run against CAF president Ahmad in 2021.

FIFA president Gianni Infantino recently floated the idea of a new regional league featuring 20 top clubs. "We have to take the 20 best African clubs and put them in an Africa league," said Infantino.

"Such a league could make at least $200m in revenue."

Big guns...Africa's Al Ahly (in black) and Etoile du Sahel

19 WHO WILL WIN EURO 2020?

The 2020 European Championship will be like no other previous tournament. Played at stadiums in 12 different cities spread across the Continent, the pan-European event will pose numerous logistical problems for travelling supporters.

The full list of qualifiers will not be known until the end of March, when the four play-off finals take place.

The Groups

GROUP A
Turkey, Italy, Wales, Switzerland

JUNE 12 Turkey v Italy
Rome Olimpico, 8pm
JUNE 13 Wales v Switzerland
Baku, 2pm
JUNE 17 Turkey v Wales
Baku, 5pm
JUNE 17 Italy v Switzerland
Rome Olimpico, 8pm
JUNE 21 Italy v Wales
Rome Olimpico, 5pm
JUNE 21 Switzerland v Turkey
Baku, 5pm

GROUP B
Denmark, Finland, Belgium, Russia

JUNE 13 Denmark v Finland
Copenhagen, 5pm
JUNE 13 Belgium v Russia
Saint Petersburg, 8pm
JUNE 17 Finland v Russia
Saint Petersburg, 2pm
JUNE 18 Denmark v Belgium
Copenhagen, 5pm
JUNE 22 Finland v Belgium
Saint Petersburg, 8pm
JUNE 22 Russia v Denmark
Copenhagen, 8pm

GROUP C
Holland, Ukraine, Austria,
Play-off winner D (A)*

JUNE 14 Austria v Winner play-off D
Bucharest, 5pm
JUNE 14 Holland v Ukraine
Amsterdam, 8pm
JUNE 18 Ukraine v Winner play-off D
Bucharest, 2pm
JUNE 18 Holland v Austria
Amsterdam, 8pm
JUNE 22 Ukraine v Austria
Bucharest, 5pm
JUNE 22 Winner play-off D v Holland
Amsterdam, 5pm

GROUP D
England, Croatia, Play-off winner C,
Czech Republic

JUNE 14 England v Croatia
London Wembley, 2pm
JUNE 15 Winner play-off C v Czech Rep
Glasgow Hampden Park, 2pm
JUNE 19 Croatia v Czech Rep
Glasgow Hampden Park, 5pm
JUNE 19 England v Winner play-off C
London Wembley, 8pm
JUNE 23 Croatia v Winner play-off Path C,
Glasgow Hampden Park, 8pm
JUNE 23 Czech Rep v England
London Wembley, 8pm

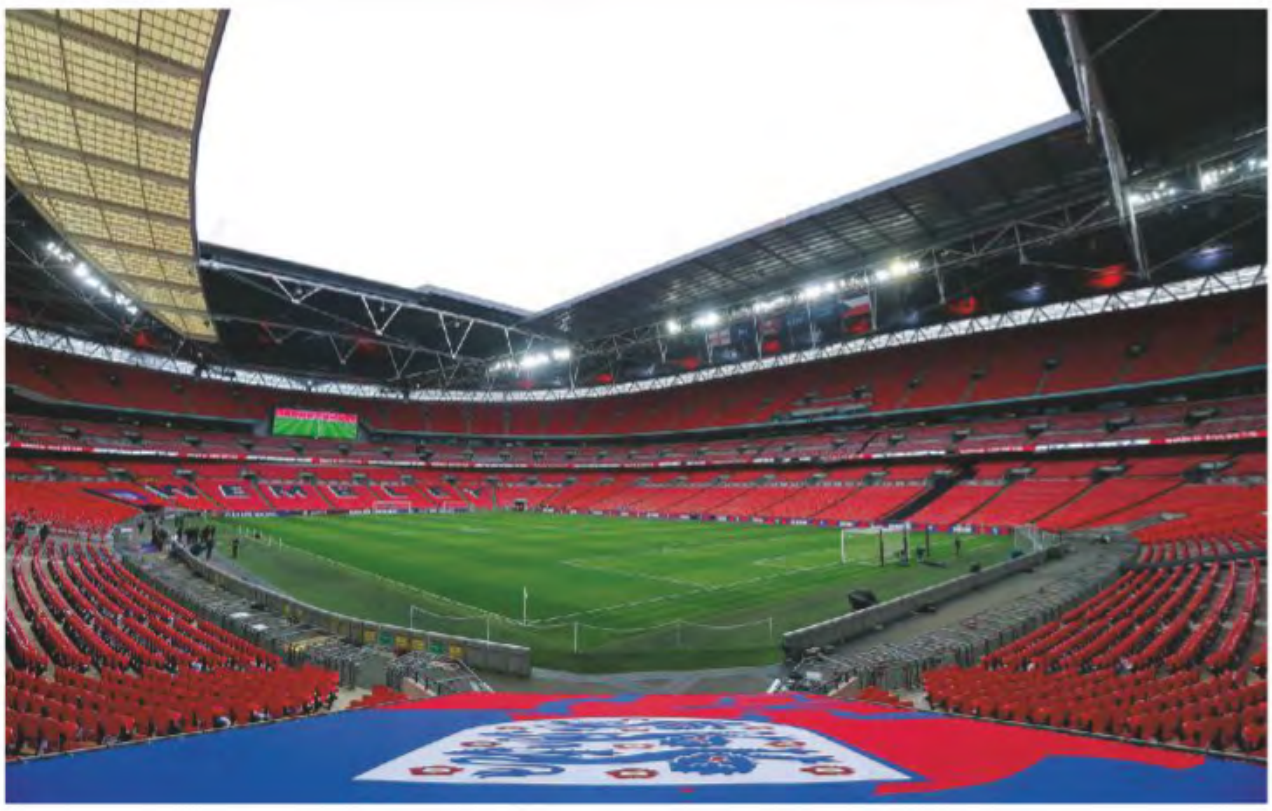
Holders...Portugal

GROUP E
Spain, Sweden, Poland,
Play-off winner B

JUNE 15 Poland v Winner play-off B
Dublin, 5pm
JUNE 15 Spain v Sweden
Bilbao, 8pm
JUNE 19 Sweden v Winner play-off B
Dublin, 2pm
JUNE 20 Spain v Poland
Bilbao, 8pm
JUNE 24 Sweden v Poland
Dublin, 5pm
JUNE 24 Winner play-off B v Spain
Bilbao, 5pm

GROUP F
Play-off winner A (D)*, Portugal,
France, Germany

JUNE 16 Winner play-off A v Portugal
Budapest, 5pm
JUNE 16 France v Germany
Munich, 8pm
JUNE 20 Winner play-off A v France
Budapest, 2pm
JUNE 20 Portugal v Germany
Munich, 5pm
JUNE 24 Germany v Winner play-off A
Munich, 8pm
JUNE 24 Portugal v France
Budapest, 8pm



Final...Wembley

Play-off Winner A is allocated to Group F and Play-off Winner D to Group C. If Romania qualify as Path A winners, they will play in Group C and Play-off Winner D will be switched to Group F. The play-off winners will be known in March 2020*

**Play-offs

Semi-finals to be played on March 26, with the finals five days later on March 31

PATH A

SEMI-FINAL 1 Iceland v Romania
SEMI-FINAL 2 Bulgaria v Hungary

PATH B

SEMI-FINAL 1 Bosnia & Herzegovina v Northern Ireland
SEMI-FINAL 2 Slovakia v Republic of Ireland

PATH C

SEMI-FINAL 1 Scotland v Israel
SEMI-FINAL 2 Norway v Serbia

PATH D

SEMI-FINAL 1 Georgia v Belarus
SEMI-FINAL 2 North Macedonia v Kosovo

Crunch...Germany (in white) host France on June 16

Knockout stage

ROUND OF 16

JUNE 27 A2 v B2
Amsterdam, 5pm (1)
JUNE 27 A1 v C2
London Wembley, 8pm (2)
JUNE 28 C1 v DEF3
Budapest, 5pm (3)
JUNE 28 B1 v ADEF3
Bilbao, 8pm (4)
JUNE 29 D2 v E2
Copenhagen, 5pm (5)
JUNE 29 F1 v ABC3
Bucharest, 8pm (6)
JUNE 30 D1 v F2
Dublin, 5pm (7)
JUNE 30 E1 v ABCD3
Glasgow Hampden Park, 8pm (8)

QUARTER-FINALS

JULY 3 R16 5 v R16 6
Saint Petersburg, 5pm (1)
JULY 3 R16 4 v R16 2
Munich, 8pm (2)
JULY 4 R16 3 v R16 1
Baku, 5pm (3)
JULY 4 R16 7 v R16 8
Rome, 8pm (4)

SEMI-FINALS

JULY 7 QF 1 v QF 2
London Wembley, 8pm
JULY 8 QF 3 v QF 4
London Wembley, 8pm

Final

JULY 12 *London Wembley, 8pm*

Showdown...Sweden (in yellow) visit Spain on June 15

Glenn Moore

A decade of progress

The past 10 years have seen huge positive developments for the women's game

The decade was only four weeks old when Los Angeles Sol, regular-season champions of Women's Professional Soccer (WPS), and home to Marta, the world's best player, announced they were folding. As a symbol of where the women's game was 10 years ago it was sadly apt. The one-year-old WPS – the second attempt to establish a professional competition in the USA, the sport's strongest nation – was already struggling. It would fold in 2012.

Across the Atlantic things were no better. UEFA had rebranded the Women's Cup as the Champions League, but while 10,372 fans saw Turbine Potsdam beat Lyon in the Final, a more typical gate was the 724 who watched Arsenal, perennial winners of England's FA Women's Premier League, go out. Not that anyone knew. Media coverage of these events was all but non-existent, especially outside the US. Banned in most parts of the world for half a century, the sport was no longer an underground movement but it was still very much in the shadows.

At least Marta was getting paid, handsomely, and many Arsenal players were given jobs at their club, albeit sometimes in the laundry, washing the kit of the men. For most female players the situation at neighbours Tottenham was more typical: players training in their spare time, paying subs and taking their kit home to wash. The coach, Karen Hills, even drove the minibus to matches.

Ten years on, Hills recalled those days as she sat at the podium in the impressive media auditorium in the swanky new Tottenham Hotspur stadium. Her team had just played Arsenal in the WSL's first North London derby in front of 38,262 – a new record for a women's league match in England. The stage underscored the growing seriousness with which England's big men's clubs now take the women's game. Manchester United did not even have a women's team until 2018. Now, like every other WSL team, they are full-time.

Chelsea, West Ham United, Liverpool and Manchester City have also drawn 20,000-plus crowds at the men's stadia this season, something that was barely imaginable when WSL kicked off in April 2011 with a curious 2,510 – a record at that time – watching Arsenal beat Chelsea at Tooting & Mitcham. Nor would many have dreamed the national team, on a grim winter's day, could draw 77,768 to Wembley, as they did in November.

If progress in England has been most dramatic it is by no means alone. Though WPS collapsed after three years, the void was swiftly filled by the National Women's Soccer League. NWSL has advanced cautiously and there have been setbacks, but the competition has completed seven seasons and growth is steady. In Portland Thorns the league has the first women's club to average 20,000-plus gates.

The majority of NWSL clubs are offshoots of, or partners with, Major League Soccer franchises. This mirrors a global development with women's teams increasingly part of men's clubs, usually subsidised by them. Like Manchester United, marquee names such as Real Madrid, Juventus, Milan and Roma have either founded a women's team or taken over an existing independent one. Others, like Barcelona and Manchester City, have begun to invest seriously in what were previously sidelines or community enterprises.

Porto and Borussia Dortmund are now the biggest clubs without a women's side, and fans of the latter hoisted a banner at a men's home game in November stating: "Football is for all: Women's team now."

Elsewhere, new leagues have sprung up from India, Jordan and Sudan, to Mexico, Argentina and Australia, and there are new competitions, with the UEFA Champions League expanding and an Asian version launched.

The Mexican league has attracted gates in excess of 30,000 for some championship matches, while set-piece fixtures in Spain and Italy, at Atletico Madrid and Juventus, have pulled in crowds of 60,739 and 39,027 respectively.

Another symbolic development is the creation of female divisions in awards such as the Ballon d'Or. Blue-chip sponsors are now interested and broadcast deals are growing in scope and value.

However, there remains a long way to go. Flourishing, even surviving, without the backing of a wealthy men's club can be difficult. Regular attendances, as against one-off

> Manchester United did not have a women's team until 2018. Now, like every WSL team, they are full-time

Record...a crowd of 38,262 saw Spurs take on Arsenal

Support...Dortmund fans demand a women's team

18+

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events, remain poor in most countries, including England. And there still remains stiff resistance to women's football in parts of the world; FIFA rank 210 men's teams but only 161 women's teams with many African and Asian nations without female representation.

In England and the United States, and at the bigger clubs in Germany and France, it is now possible to make a living from the game, but even in the west many players remain part-time,

Euro champs... Turbine Potsdam in 2010

while in the developing world most are effectively amateur.

Players are realistic and aware that a sport which requires subsidies is going to be less well remunerated. The exception, however, is revealing.

The US team are currently suing US Soccer for gender discrimination in a bid for equal pay and conditions – the back-to-back World Cup winners generate more income for the governing body than the men's team, which failed to qualify for the 2018 World Cup. WS

Round-up

Prolific...Vivianne Miedema (right)

Recognition... Megan Rapinoe

▲ DOUBLE FOR RAPINOE

Megan Rapinoe completed a memorable year by winning both the Ballon d'Or Feminin and The Best FIFA Women's Player awards.

For club and country the 34-year-old Reign FC forward only played 20 matches in 2019, scoring nine goals and assisting seven, but she had an impact way beyond those moderate stats. On the pitch she was influential in the USA's World Cup win; off it, her advocacy made her a global figure in campaigns for equality in the fields of gender, sexuality and race.

Lucy Bronze (Lyon and England) and Alex Morgan (Orlando Pride and USA) were second and third in the Ballon d'Or, trading places in The Best.

▶ SCOTT RETURNS TO ENGLAND

Dawn Scott – who as high-performance coach was regarded as a key figure when the United States won two World Cups and Olympic gold, often over-running opponents – returned to her native England in a coup for Phil Neville's team. Scott, who hails from England's north east, previously worked for the FA from 2001 to 2010.

▲ MIEDEMA STARS IN ROUT

Dutch striker Vivianne Miedema scored six goals and created four more as Arsenal beat Bristol City 11-1 for a record WSL score.

Miedema was substituted after 70 minutes with the score at 10-0, when she had made or scored every goal.

▶ CHAMPIONS LEAGUE GROUPS

UEFA has agreed to an expansion of the Champions League and the main leagues will now enter three teams, instead of two, with a 16-team group stage with centralised marketing and TV rights. The changes will start in the 2021-22 season.

Juventus, Bayern Munich and Manchester City are among the major clubs to be knocked out early on in recent years, while last year's semi-finalists Chelsea were among those denied entry this season.

▶ LYON BUYING REIGN

European champions Lyon are to take a controlling interest in Reign FC, the NWSL club based near Seattle. The Predmore family, who have been majority owners since its founding in 2012, will retain a minority stake, with Bill Predmore remaining as CEO.

Champs...Beleza (in green)

▼ JAPAN'S BELEZA TRIUMPH IN ASIA

Nippon TV Beleza won the inaugural AFC Women's Club Championship hosted in Yongin, China.

The Tokyo-based side drew with China's Jiangsu Suning before defeating Melbourne Victory and runners-up Incheon Hyundai Steel Red Angels of South Korea to win the four-team round-robin tournament.

Beleza's Japanese international Mina Tanaka was top scorer with four goals.

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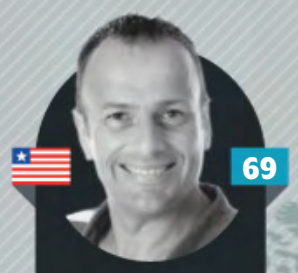

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Champion...Erik of Yokohama F-Marinos (right)

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Cup winner...Athletico Paranaense's Bruno Guimaraes

Brazil

TIM VICKERY

On the up...(from left) Flamengo's Bruno Henrique, Lincoln and Vitinho celebrate

Flying Flamengo's title

Jorge Jesus' attacking game overwhelms the opposition

Flamengo did not just win the Brazilian championship, they smashed it, finishing 16 points clear in a league that is often referred to as the most competitive in the world.

And it was not only a case of what Flamengo did; it was how they did it.

Imposing themselves on games, they played a high defensive line and squeezed the opposition in their own half. With fluidity of attacking movement and lots of interesting angles for quick passes, they overwhelmed opponent after opponent.

Portuguese coach Jorge Jesus, who was appointed in the middle of the year, did nothing more than apply some of the principles of contemporary top-class European football. His success, however, is a major wake-up call to the Brazilian game and its big club sides.

The clearest example are Palmeiras. Flush with money, boasting a deep squad and with a splendid new stadium, the defending champions went into this campaign with great expectations but ended up winning nothing. They lost twice to Flamengo – 3-0 in Rio and 3-1 in Sao Paulo – and reacted each time by sacking their coach; first Luiz Felipe Scolari, then Mano Menezes.

Significantly, Scolari and Menezes are both former national-team bosses whose Palmeiras side were made to look sluggish and outdated. As a result, there is now a huge question mark against the way domestic Brazilian football has gone of late, with its obsessive reliance on deep defence and counter-attack.

Flamengo, have established a new measure of what is possible.

To make matters worse for the local coaching fraternity, Palmeiras lost out on goal difference for second place to Santos, whose Argentinian boss Jorge Sampaoli performed wonders on a very restricted budget before resigning at the end of the campaign. The fact Sampaoli could achieve so much with so little and be so bold with his attacking style of play was another message to Brazilian clubs – and one that at least Sao Paulo chose to heed.

They ended the campaign under

Review

Cup winners... Athletico Paranaense

Fernando Diniz, a local coach with an attacking mentality. With the addition of national captain Daniel Alves, his side finished sixth to earn a spot in the group stage of the 2020 Copa Libertadores.

Corinthians and Internacional, the two teams immediately behind Sao Paulo, will play in the qualifying rounds of the Libertadores after producing seasons of relentless mediocrity.

Apart from Flamengo, few clubs will look back on the year with any great pleasure – with the exception of Gremio and Athletico Paranaense.

Athletico added to their growing list of triumphs by winning the domestic cup and came up with a solid league season, but they will now have to replace coach Thiago Nunes, who was seduced by Corinthians.

Significantly, Scolari and Menezes are both former national-team bosses whose Palmeiras side were made to look sluggish and outdated

Lacking the resources to compete on multiple fronts, Gremio gave priority to the cup competitions and sacrificed league points by fielding reserve sides in some games. But it all went wrong in the semi-finals, where they lost on penalties to Athletico in the domestic cup and were massacred by Flamengo in the Libertadores. However, they rallied extremely well in the league to book a place in the 2020 Copa.

Promoted sides Fortaleza and Goias put enough good runs together to finish mid-table, but Avai crashed straight back down again, as did CSA of Manaus.

The relegation of Chapecoense, almost three years to the day after the air disaster, was no surprise although it has been remarkable how a town of just 220,000 has been able to sustain such a success story. They charged through all four national divisions before tragedy struck. In 2017 other clubs loaned them players and there was a strong emotional quest to honour the dead by maintaining the team in the top flight, an objective achieved with great merit. But when the loaned players left, the task, inevitably, became harder.

They flirted with a drop to the second tier in 2018 and it was seldom in doubt this year as they suffered their first-ever demotion. Chapecoense, though, are well placed to know the difference between a sporting tragedy and a real one, and doubtless they will start diligent planning for the next campaign.

That left one relegation place – and plenty of big names in danger of taking it.

Vasco da Gama had looked in trouble until coach Vanderlei Luxemburgo stepped and steered them to safety. The other traditional Rio clubs, Fluminense and Botafogo, were both in desperate straights, with limited resources compounded by bad signings, but both were saved in the end – though more by the incompetence of others than by their own merits as Ceara and Cruzeiro fought out a private battle to see who would go down.

Champions in 2013 and 2014, and cup winners in both of the previous two years, Cruzeiro had gone into 2019 as one of the championship favourites – and relegation, which had never happened to them, was unthinkable.

A poor start was brushed off as priority was being given to cup competitions and it was felt that they could turn on the tap at will. But cup exits soon exposed a problem: the team had aged, the side was slow and some of the younger players seemed to do more running than thinking. Under pressure, things got worse and by November off-the-field scandals were breaking, there were clear problems in the dressing room and there was a continuing change of coach.

Sacked by relegation rivals Ceara, Adilson Batista took over for the last three games but even a final day win at home to Palmeiras would not have been enough to save Cruzeiro. Instead, they lost 2-0 in a match that was abandoned five minutes from the end as revolted fans staged a riot.

In the past several big Brazilian clubs have benefited from a spell in the second tier and bounced back stronger, but things have gone so badly wrong at Cruzeiro that they may not find it so easy.

Serie B champions Bragantino, who are backed by Red Bull money, could make a real impression in the top flight next term, having been promoted along with Sport of Recife, Coritiba and Atletico Goiananese. WS

Not enough... Palmeiras' Dudu beats Rhodolfo of Flamengo

SEASON'S BEST

PLAYER OF THE SEASON
Pablo MARI (Flamengo)
While the front four took the plaudits, the foundation of Flamengo's title-winning side was their Spanish centre-back. Thrown in at the deep end, he was responsible for organising the high defensive line that allowed the team to stay compact in attack.

Incisive... Michael

NEWCOMER OF THE YEAR
MICHAEL (Goias)
The little 22-year-old winger enjoyed a wonderful debut season in the top flight, throwing off a wild-child past to torment defences with incisive dribbling at pace that was rounded off with the capacity to score goals. Clearly, he is destined for bigger things.

COACH OF THE SEASON
Jorge JESUS (Flamengo)
Despite little media support on his arrival, and with many local coaches wishing him to fail, there has never been a more convincing Brazilian title success. The fans' "Mister, Mister" chant in his honour became an essential part of Flamengo games.

AFC Champ League

JOHN DUERDEN

Review

Al Hilal crowned Asian champions

Saudi side win home and away in Final

It had been a long time coming but, in the November night sky just north of Tokyo, Al Hilal finally lifted the AFC Champions League trophy, the Saudi Arabians beating Urawa Red Diamonds, 1-0 at home and then 2-0 in Japan.

It was a deserved victory, even though the crowds that lined the streets of Riyadh to hail the homecoming heroes would have turned out anyway.

The television audience for the game was also swelled by thousands of students in the region who were allowed to finish school early and watch the second leg.

That decision, however, was met with disapproval from authorities who felt that giving fans of one club such privileges would only lead to others wanting the same in the future. Ministry of Education spokesperson Ebtesam Al Shehri tweeted: "The Ministry of Education considers that educational institutions are vital systems of society, with educational messages that do not fit involvement in the competitions of sports clubs."

That may be true – but one of the biggest clubs on the continent really wanted this.

It was third time lucky for Hilal, who had lifted the top prize in Asia twice before, in 1991 and 2000, when it was known as the Asian Club Championship, but had not won the Champions League since it began in 2003.

Goals...Al Hilal's Bafetimbi Gomis

Hilal had come close twice before. In 2014 they dominated the Final against Western Sydney Wanderers. They lost the first leg 1-0 in Australia but the pressure was intense in Riyadh, with four penalty shouts turned down by the referee in a goalless draw that their fans have not stopped talking about since.

Three years later they made the Final again and were on top once more, only to lose 2-1 to Urawa Reds.

This time, with former Lyon and Swansea City striker Bafetimbi Gomis scoring 10 goals on the way to the Final, it felt different. They had South Korean international Jang Hyun-soo, Andre Carrillo of Peru and Italy's Sebastian Giovinco, plus a host of Saudi stars such as Salman Al Faraj, Salem Al Dawsari and Yasser Al Shahrani – all of which made for a solid team that was well led by former Romania national boss Razvan Lucescu.

Historically, the team that wins the first leg goes on to win the trophy – as Hilal knew only too well

On their journey to the Final, domestic rivals Al Ahli and Al Ittihad were dispatched in the second round and quarter-finals respectively. Then came a humdinger of a semi-final against Al Sadd of Qatar. The Saudis won 4-1 in Doha but almost threw it away at home, losing 4-2 but taking the tie 6-5 on aggregate.

Over in the east – the tournament is divided into two geographic zones until the Final – Urawa squeezed past Ulsan Hyundai of South Korea and then beat Shanghai SIPG on away goals. The Reds were too also strong for Fabio Cannavaro's Guangzhou Evergrande in the semi-finals, winning 3-0 on aggregate.

Urawa's run to the Final may not have been as exciting as Al Hilal's but it did provide some welcome respite from domestic issues. Champions in 2007 and 2017, they had been struggling in the J.League and were flirting with relegation. It seemed that the players enjoyed the distraction of Asia, with Shinzo Koroki scoring eight goals on the way to a Final where they always looked second best against Al Hilal.

Historically, the team that wins the first leg goes on to win the trophy – as Hilal knew only too well. They attacked from the get-go but were frustrated by poor finishing, heroic goalline clearances and inspired goalkeeping by stand-in Haruki Fukushima. His mistake on the hour, however, allowed Carrillo to head the only goal.

That 1-0 win in Riyadh was highly encouraging, even if it was tinged with

Dejected...beaten finalists Urawa Reds

Asian champions... Al Hilal celebrate

regret that the lead was not bigger due to the numerous chances spurned.

But with Urawa having failed to score in Riyadh, the odds looked long in the return leg, even though they were roared on by 60,000 fans. Rarely threatening the visitors' goal, Urawa looked short of ideas and once Al Dawsari scored for Hilal with 20 minutes remaining the celebrations started. It was all over long before Gomis added a second on the night in injury time.

While the triumph was greeted with delirium in parts of Riyadh, it was – or at least should have been – also welcomed in the rest of West Asia.

Since 2005 only one team from the west has won the continental championship, Al Sadd from Qatar in 2011, and that win was a fortunate one. This time, Hilal's win was fully deserved.

With Qatar lifting the Asian Cup in January, West Asia now has the twin titles of club and national team champions for the first time this century.

It would appear that Asian football is undeniably changing. WS

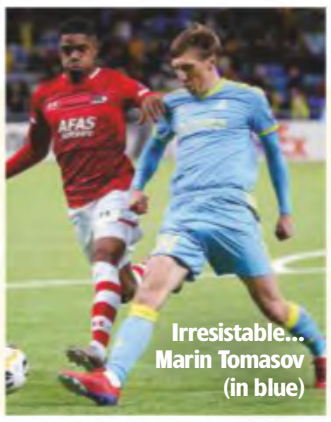
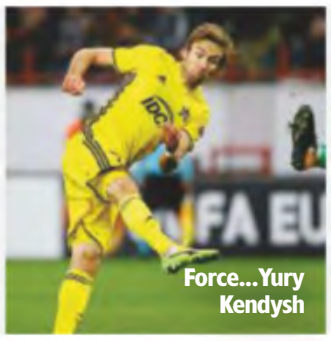
Threat...Urawa's Fabricio tries to stop Jang Hyun-soo of Al Hilal

	HOW THE LEAGUE WAS WON	CUP WINNERS	WHO QUALIFIED FOR EUROPE
Belarus PREMIER LEAGUE *by Oleg Zadernovsky*	After 13 seasons as champions, BATE Borisov were finally dethroned by Dynamo Brest, who won the title by five points. Cup winners in 2017 and 2018, their chairman for a short time in 2018 was Diego Maradona.	Shakhtyor Soligorsk lifted the cup for the first time since their foundation in 1961, beating Vitebsk 2-0 in the Final with goals from Darko Bodul and Nikola Antic.	Dynamo Brest will test themselves in the Champions League qualifiers for the first time, while BATE and Shakhtyor go to the Europa League preliminaries.
Estonia MEISTRILIIGA *by Andres Must*	A youthful side, with an average age of 24, Flora won the title for a record-extending 12th time as they finished 12 points clear of their city rival Levadia. The champions only lost four league games all season, including two to third-place Kalju.	Cup holders Narva Trans thrashed Tallinna FC Eston Villa II 21-0 in late October to progress to the quarter-final stage, to be played early in 2020. The Final is scheduled for May.	Flora go into the first qualifying round of the Champions League, while Levadia and Kalju will take part in the first qualifying round of the Europa League, along with the eventual cup winners.
Faroe Islands PREMIER LEAGUE *by Nick Bidwell*	The title race could not have been more thrilling, with KI and B36 level on points after the penultimate round of games and the two teams meeting on the final weekend. KI won 3-0 away to secure a first domestic championship in two decades.	League champions in 2018, HB offered a threadbare title defence but gained some crumbs of comfort in the knockout arena, beating Vikingur 3-1 in a fog-bound Final. The pick of HB's goals was their opener, a fine direct free-kick curled in by winger Adrian Justinussen.	KI have a ticket for the first qualifying round of the Champions League. Runners-up B36 and third-place NSI join cup winners HB in the Europa League preliminary round.
Finland VEIKKAUSLIIGA *by John Holmesdale*	KuPS were crowned champions for the first time since 1976. With a new league format, they finished top with 53 points, five ahead of Inter Turku.	Ilves beat IFK Mariehamm 2-0 in the Final. Matias Ojala opened the scoring with a 33rd-minute penalty following a foul on Baba Mensah. Ilves controlled the game and a minute before the break they added a second goal through Tatu Miettus.	KuPS qualified for next season's Champions League first qualifying round, while Inter Turku and cup-winners Ilves enter the first preliminary stage of the Europa League. Honka also qualified for the Europa League qualifiers after winning a play-off against IFK Mariehamm.
Georgia EROVNULI LIGA *by Oleg Zadernovsky*	Runners-up for the past two seasons, Dinamo Tbilisi won a record-extending 17th league title, finishing five points ahead of both defending champions Saburtalo and Dinamo Batumi, who were second due to better head-to-head results.	Saburtalo won the cup for the first time, beating Locomotive Tbilisi 3-1 in the Final.	Dinamo Tbilisi are in the preliminaries for the Champions League. Dinamo Batumi, Saburtalo and Locomotive Tbilisi go into the Europa League qualifiers.
Iceland URVALSDEILD *by Skapti Hallgrimsson*	Record champions KR won their 27th league title, six years after the last one. While not offering anything sensational on the pitch, they were by far the most solid side with 52 points from 22 matches. In second place were Breidablik with 38.	Despite a mid-table finish, a mostly young Vikingur side managed to win the cup for a second time, beating FH 1-0 in the Final with a goal from Ottar Magnus Karlsson.	KR will enter the first qualifying round of the Champions League, while cup winners Vikingur, Breidablik and third-in-the-league FH go into the Europa League first qualifying round.

PROMOTED/ RELEGATED		PLAYER OF THE SEASON	COACH OF THE SEASON	NEWCOMER OF THE SEASON
Torpedo Minsk and Gomel were relegated and will be replaced by Belshina Bobruisk and Smolevitchi. Rukh Brest beat Dnyapro Mogilev on penalties in the relegation/promotion play-off and take their place in the top flight.	Veteran ...Artem Milevsky	At 34, former Dynamo Kiev and Ukraine international striker Artem Milevsky played a huge part, both in the dressing room and on the pitch, in Dynamo Brest's success.	Czech coach Marcel Licka replaced his compatriot Radoslav Latal at Dynamo Brest in the summer of 2018 and won the Belarus Super Cup and league title in his first season in charge.	The Premier League's top scorer in his first full competitive season with modest Energetik-BGU Minsk, midfielder Ilya Shkurin scored 19 times in 26 games even though his side only finished 12th.
Maardu Linnameeskond, who declined promotion in 2017, made their top-flight debut but went straight back down after finishing bottom and are replaced by Tallinna Legion. Kuressaare beat second-tier Parnu Vaprus in the relegation/ promotion play-off.	Champions ...Flora	With 31 goals, Flora striker Erik Sorga was the league's top scorer. The 20-year-old was also called-up to the national squad for the first time.	In his second season with Flora, 32-year-old Jurgen Henn guided the team to the league title and to the second qualifying round of the Europa League.	Signed from Real de Banjul in his homeland, Gambian defender Muhammed Sanneh played a big part in Paide Linnameeskond's most successful season. Solid performances by the 19-year-old helped them to fourth place, three points behind Kalju.
Normally, bottom club IF – who won only once during the entire campaign – would have gone down, but they were saved by the fact that the top three sides in the second tier were the reserve teams of top-flight clubs (KI, Vikingur and NSI) and therefore could not be promoted.	Solid...Atli Gregersen	In his final season before retiring, towering centre-back and captain Atli Gregersen was as solid and inspirational as ever. The 37-year-old has had a wonderful career, capped 59 times for his country, skippering the national team and appearing in over 250 games for Vikingur.	Strategically, tactically and emotionally, KI boss Mikkjal Thomassen pushed all the right buttons in 2019. In charge for the last five years, the former Faroes international midfielder is living proof that leadership continuity works.	Twenty-year-old American forward Darius Lewis showed great promise as an impact player for champions KI. A graduate of the Philadelphia Union academy, he knocked down the first-team door with a hatful of goals for the club's second string.
A season after competing in the Europa League qualifiers, VPS were relegated. Haka were promoted, along with second-placed TPS, who won the relegation play-off against top-tier KPV.	Moving...Jani Honkavaara	Inter Turku's Slovenian striker Filip Valencic, on loan from Norwegian side Stabaek, finished the season as the league's top scorer with 16 goals.	Jani Honkavaara steered KupS to the title before announcing he will take charge of 2015 champions SJK in his hometown Sainajoki next season. He joined KuPS in 2017 and steered them back to the top flight and that success continued with an attacking approach.	Ghanaian defensive midfielder Jude Arthur had an impressive first campaign in the Veikkausliiga, making more tackles than any other player and securing a permanent move from Liberty Professionals.
Title winners in 2009, WIT-Georgia are relegated and replaced by Norchi Dinamoeli, who will play in the top flight for the first time. Samtredia and Telavi are also promoted after beating Sioni Bolnisi and Rustavi respectively in the play-offs.	Goals...Levan Kutalia	Levan Kutalia's 20 goals in 33 league matches helped Dinamo Tbilisi to their first league title since 2016.	The former physical preparation coach of Chinese club Dailan Yifang, 41-year-old Spaniard Felix Vicente was appointed by Dinamo Tbilisi in January and his side's attacking style of play saw them finish as the league's top scorers with 70 goals.	Montenegro striker Ognijen Rolovic joined Saburtalo from Albanian side Kamza and scored eight goals in his first season in Georgia.
Promoted from the third tier the year before, Grotta from the village of Seltjarnarnes on the outskirts of Reykjavik will play in the top flight for the first time in their 52-year history. They are joined by second-tier runners-up Fjolnir and replace Grindavik and IBV.	Return ...Runar Kristinsson	At 35, KR captain Oskar Orn Hauksson was the second-oldest player ever to be voted player of the year. The winger has now played 309 games in the Icelandic top flight, with over 250 of those for KR.	Back at KR after working abroad, Runar Kristinsson led the side to the title – just as he had done before leaving in 2013. Oskar Hrafn Thorvaldsson deserves a mention for his success with Grotta, although he will be in charge of Breidablik next season.	Eighteen year-old central defender Finnur Tomas Palmason had a great debut season for KR and was a key player in a very strong league-winning side.

EUROPEAN SEASON REVIEW

	HOW THE LEAGUE WAS WON	CUP WINNERS	WHO QUALIFIED FOR EUROPE
Kazakhstan PREMIER LEAGUE *by Nick Bidwell*	Astana won their sixth straight crown but they made heavy weather of it, losing no fewer than eight times and only ending the season one point ahead of runners-up Kairat.	Hot favourites Kaysar had to dig deep to break the spirited resistance of relegated Atyrau in the Final. One-nil down, Kaysar equalised in the 88th minute and won 2-1 in the 123rd minute of extra time.	Astana will begin next season's European odyssey at the first qualifying stage of the Champions League. Kairat, third-placed Ordabasy and cup-holders Kaysar are bound for the Europa League primaries.
Latvia VIRSLIGA *by Nick Bidwell*	Despite no fewer than four changes of coach in 2019, Riga still managed to power their way to a second consecutive league crown. After beginning sluggishly, they lost just once in their final 15 fixtures.	Slovak midfielder Tomas Simkovic scored an extra-time winner as RFS beat Jelgava 3-2 in the Final after they had surrendered a two-goal half-time lead.	Riga will be in the draw for the first qualifying round of the Champions League. League runners-up and cup winners RFS and Ventspils are bound for the Europa League sifting process, along with fourth-place Valmiera.
Lithuania A LYGA *by Nick Bidwell*	Suduva won their third straight title, losing just four times and scoring an impressive 95 goals. Runners-up Zalgiris were in contention for some time, only to fade somewhat in the last couple of months.	Suduva cruised to a 4-0 victory over second-tier Banga Gargzdai in the Final despite being reduced to 10 men for the last 20 minutes after Croat defender Andro Svrljuga was sent off.	Suduva can look forward to a piece of the Champions League preliminary action. Zalgiris, Riteriai and Kauno Zalgiris will have a stab at reaching the Europa League group stage.
Moldova NATIONAL DIVISION *by Miron Goihman*	Finishing 17 points ahead of runners-up Sfantul Gheorghe, Sheriff were crowned champions for a fifth successive season and for an 18th time in total. They have been league winners every year since 2001 bar two.	The semi-finals will take place over two legs in spring 2020, with Sfantul Gheorghe taking on Speranta Nisporen, and Petrocub-Hincesti facing Sheriff.	Sheriff are in the Champions League preliminaries, while Sfantul Gheorghe and Petrocub-Hincest are in the Europa League qualifiers. They will be joined by either Speranta Nisporen (if they win the cup) or fourth-place Dinamo-Auto.
Norway ELITESERIEN *by John Holmesdale*	Molde, having finished second under Ole Gunnar Solskjaer the previous season, claimed their fourth league title after finishing 14 points clear of closest challengers Bodo-Glimt and defending champions Rosenborg.	Viking won their sixth cup after beating Haugesund in the Final thanks to Zlatko Tripic's second-half penalty. It capped an excellent season for coach Bjarne Berntsen, who also steered the relegation favourites to fifth in the league.	Molde go the into the 2020-21 Champions league qualifiers, while Bodo-Glimt and Rosenborg are in the Europa League first qualifying round. Viking enter the Europa League in the second round of preliminaries.
Republic of Ireland PREMIER DIVISION *by Sean Creedon*	Shamrock Rovers had a 10-point lead over Dundalk by the end of April, but losses to Bohemians and Dundalk in May saw their title bid collapse and Dundalk clinched a fifth title in six years at the end of September.	After a 32-year wait, Shamrock Rovers extended their record with a 25th FAI Cup success, denying Dundalk a league-and-cup double with a penalty shoot-out victory.	Dundalk are in the Champions League qualifiers once again, while Bohemians return to continental competition for the first time since 2012, entering the Europa League with Shamrock Rovers and Derry City.
Sweden ALLSVENSKAN *by Nick Bidwell*	With just one round of fixtures left, Djurgarden, Malmo and Hammarby were all in with a shot of the title. Stockholm outfit Djurgarden were the last team standing, claiming their first championship since 2005.	Hacken are the holders and the group stage of the 2020 Swedish Cup gets underway in February.	Djurgarden start in the Champions League first qualifying round. Malmo and Hammarby – whose last taste of continental competition was 12 years ago – will be in the Europa League with the eventual cup winners.

PROMOTED/ RELEGATED		PLAYER OF THE SEASON	COACH OF THE SEASON	NEWCOMER OF THE SEASON
Aktobe would have gone down with Atyrau even if they hadn't been deducted 12 points for unpaid debts to former players. Taraz survived a relegation play-off against Akzhayik. Kyzylzhar and Caspiy go up from the second tier.	 Irresistable... Marin Tomasov (in blue)	Astana's Croat winger Marin Tomasov was simply irresistible, not only winning the league's Golden Boot with 19 goals but also creating 14 more. He was responsible for almost half of his side's end product.	Andrei Karpovich did a fine job in keeping promoted Okzhetpes out of the relegation mire. His side were well organised and enterprising to boot. He is famous for scoring Kazakhstan's first goal in a competitive international.	For someone who only appeared in 10 league games, lively and inventive Kairat winger Sultanbek Astanov caused quite a stir, so much so that he was promptly drafted into the national under-21 set-up.
Runaway second-tier champions Tukum were promoted, but runners-up Super Nova lost 3-1 on aggregate in the play-off to METTA/LU, who stay up despite finishing bottom of the top flight as the division expands to 10 teams.	Impact... Tamaz Pertia	Riga striker Darko Lemajic enjoyed a productive campaign, scoring 15 times in just 21 starts. The only sour note for the giant Serb was a tendency to pick up too many yellow and red cards.	Tamaz Pertia made an immediate impact at the Valmiera helm, the tactically astute Georgian taking a flatlining side and steering them to their first-ever European qualification.	One of three Nigerians brought in by Valmiera in mid-season, striker Emmanuel Arokodare – who was previously with amateur side Box to Box FC – was full of running, vitality and goals.
Stumbras went bankrupt in June, were kicked out of the league and ceased to exist. They are replaced by second-tier champions Dziugas Telsiai, while Banga also go up after beating Palanga in the play-off.	Intelligent... Mihret Topcagic	With 13 league goals for Suduva and two more in his side's cup Final triumph, Bosnian striker Mihret Topcagic proved to be both an excellent chance-taker and an intelligent attacking focal point.	Brought back in February for a second spell at Zalgiris, Marek Zub was not able to break Suduva's national hegemony but he did give the Vilnius side a solid identity, and for 13 rounds they were top of the table.	On loan at Suduva from second-tier Dainava, creative midfielder Paulius Golubickas had a dream inaugural top-flight campaign. Was once on the books of English lower-league outfit Yeovil Town.
Floresti and Dacia Buiucani are promoted, with no one relegated as the league expands to 10 teams next season. A return to an autumn-spring season is currently under discussion.	 Force...Yury Kendysh	With a run of eight goals in eight successive games, Belarusian midfielder Yury Kendysh was the league's top scorer with 13 goals and was a major force in Sheriff's title-winning campaign.	Serghei Cebotari led runners-up Sfantul Gheorge to their best-ever finish. His brother, Nicolai, was the side's goalkeeper.	Sheriff's 21-year-old defender Alexandr Belousov broke into the national side.
Tromso and Ranheim were replaced by Aalesund and Sandefjord. Lillestrom lost 2-1 at Start in the play-off first leg but led 4-0 in the return with 14 minutes left. Martin Ramsland then got a six-minute hat-trick for Start, who won on away goals.	Back... Magnus Wolff	Former Manchester United trainee Magnus Wolff Eikrem returned to Molde after spells at Heerenveen, Cardiff, Malmo and Seattle Sounders and played an instrumental role in their title victory, scoring 13 goals in all competitions.	Kjetil Knutsen performed wonders at Bodo-Glimt who are based in the small town of Bodo in the Arctic Circle in Norway's far north, guiding them to a second-place finish and European football for the first time in 26 years.	Hakon Evjen enjoyed a breakthrough season at Bodo-Glimt. The 19-year-old son of former Bodo player Andreas rejected Manchester City to join AZ Alkmaar for a club record fee of £2m.
UCD were relegated and will be replaced by Shelbourne, who are in the top flight for the first time since 2013. Drogheda won the first division play-off but were then beaten by Finn Harps, who retain their Premier Division status.	Shoot-out... Shamrock keeper Alan Mannus	One-time Manchester City starlet Jack Byrne joined Shamrock Rovers last December and made such an impression in Rovers' midfield that he won his first Irish cap, against Bulgaria, in September.	Promoted when Stephen Kenny got the Irish under-21 job last November, long-time assistant Vinny Perth took charge at Dundalk and led them to the league title and cup Final.	Signed on loan by Derry City from Colchester United, Junior Ogedi-Uzokwe did well at Brandywell and two hat-tricks helped the 25-year-old to end the season as the league's top scorer with 14 goals.
Eskilstuna and Sundsvall won only four games each and are replaced by second-tier champions Mjallby and Varbergs. In the relegation/promotion play-off, Kalmar beat Brage, who were third in the second division, 4-2 on aggregate.	Duo...Bergstrand (left) and Lagerlof	The league's leading scorer with 15 goals, Djurgarden striker Mohamed Buya Turay was invariably in the right place at the right time. On loan from Belgian side Sint Truiden, he could be destined for bigger and better things.	Coaching combo Kim Bergstrand and Thomas Lagerlof have revitalised Djurgarden since arriving from Sirius early in 2019. No other team in Sweden attacked with more care in possession and fluency.	At just 17, Helsingborg defensive midfielder Armin Gigovic improved week on week, going on to play a key role as the newly-promoted club survived with relative ease.

NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 10, 2019

Global diary

A comprehensive record of recent events around the world

Friday November 22

ARGENTINA: Two days after he resigned as coach of Gimnasia y Esgrima La Plata, Diego Maradona returns, demanding: "I hope that they will provide the reinforcements promised to me."
HOLLAND: Excelsior and Volendam players stand still for the first minute of their second-tier game to protest against racism following the abuse directed at Excelsior's Ahmad Mendes Moreira by Den Bosch fans the previous Sunday. Every match in the country's top two divisions will follow suit over the weekend.

Saturday November 23

AFCON UNDER-23 CHAMP: Egypt beat Ivory Coast 2-1 in the Final and they will be joined at next year's Olympics by South Africa.
COPA LIBERTADORES: Flamengo come from behind with two goals from Gabriel Barbosa to beat River Plate 2-1 in the Final.
TURKMENISTAN: Altyn Asyr win 2-1 away to nearest challengers Sagadam to claim their sixth successive league title.

Sunday November 24

AFC CHAMPIONS LEAGUE: Saudi Arabia's Al Hilal complete a 3-0 aggregate victory over Urawa Red Diamonds of Japan in the Final.
BRAZIL: A day after winning the Copa Libertadores, Flamengo are crowned Brazilian champions as Gremio beat Palmeiras 2-1.
GUINEA: Eight years after the construction work was finished, the Chinese-built 50,000-capacity General Lansana Conte Stadium in Conakry hosts its first match as Guinea beat Mauritania 2-0 in the West African Football Union Zone A Under-20 Championship.
JAPAN: Kenyan striker Michael Olunga scores eight goals on the final day of the league season as J2 champions Kashiwa Reysol thrash Kyoto Sanga 13-1.
TAJIKISTAN: Istiklol complete a second successive double with a penalty shoot-out victory over Regar-TadAZ in the cup Final.

Monday November 25

HOLLAND: Ex-international striker Marco Van Basten is suspended from his role as a TV pundit for two weeks after using the phrase "*Sieg Heil*" on the Dutch edition of Fox Sports after a German coach was interviewed by one of the channel's reporters on Sunday.

Tuesday November 26

EGYPT: Zamalek confirm they will not travel to Qatar for February's African Super Cup game against Esperance of Tunisia. "We are two African teams, why should we play in Asia?" explains club president Mortada Mansour. "I don't understand why CAF wants to play the Super Cup in a country who is an enemy to Egypt."
SWEDEN: Former international Zlatan Ibrahimovic becomes co-owner of top-flight side Hammarby.
UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE: Robert Lewandowski scores the competition's fastest quadruple, getting four goals in 14 minutes and 31 seconds as Bayern Munich thrash Red Star 6-0 in Belgrade.

Wednesday November 27

SPAIN: National coach Luis Enrique says former assistant Robert Moreno – who took over when he stepped down in June to look after his daughter, Xana, who died from bone cancer in August aged nine – will not be returning to the national set-up. Enrique says: "He told me he wanted to take charge of the team at the Euros and that, if I wanted, he would have gone back to being my assistant afterwards. I understand, he's ambitious and he worked very hard to become head coach of the national team but he's been disloyal and I think this is a big flaw. I don't want people like this in my staff."
VENEZUELA: Zamora claim the Copa Venezuela for the first time as an 87th-minute goal from Pedro Ramirez sees them beat Monagas 1-0 in their home leg of the Final to draw 3-3 on aggregate and win on away goals.

Thursday November 28

INDIA: Manchester City's owners, the City Football Group, buy a 65 per cent stake in Indian Super

Making a stand...Ahmad Mendes Moreira (second right) and his Excelsior team-mates, along with opponents Volendam, protest

Quick...Robert Lewandowski gets his fourth goal against Red Star

League side Mumbai City, making them the eighth club in the group's network, along with New York City (USA), Melbourne City (Australia), Yokohama F Marinos (Japan), Torque (Uruguay), Girona (Spain) and Sichuan Jiuniu (China).

SCOTLAND: Alfredo Morelos' double in a 2-2 draw at Feyenoord in the Europa League sets a new record of 13 goals for a Scottish club in a European campaign.

Friday November 29

ENGLAND: Arsenal sack manager Unai Emery after 18 months in charge and put assistant Freddie Ljungberg in temporary control following a run of seven games without a win, culminating in the previous evening's 2-1 loss at home to Eintract Frankfurt.

NIGERIA: A bus carrying Premier League side Ifeanyi Ubah to a game against Jigawa Golden Stars in the north of the country is attacked by armed robbers, leaving several ➤

Record... Alfredo Morelos

Liberia

STEVE MENARY

Planning... Peter Butler

Butler lays new foundations

English coach is rebuilding national team

Peter Butler did not expect to be training Africa's greatest-ever player or the country's national president when he took the Liberia job – and most certainly not at the same time.

George Weah led his country to two Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) appearances, in 1996 and 2002, before a bitter civil war engulfed Liberia. The only African player to win the FIFA World Player of the Year and Ballon d'Or awards, Weah has been Liberia's president since January 2018 but he retains a keen interest in the game and sometimes trains with Butler's team.

The sessions are mainly to boost Weah's profile, but Butler says the former Monaco, Paris Saint-Germain and Milan striker is "very supportive".

At the end of his own playing career as a midfielder in England, with Southend United and West Ham United among others, the Yorkshireman moved into coaching nearly two decades ago, mainly in Asia, before taking charge of Botswana in 2014.

He revitalised Botswana before resigning in 2017 and returning to club work in Asia, but the lure of working at international level remained. He had talks with the Sierra Leone FA before opting to take charge of Liberia in August this year and was thrown in at the deep end with a two-legged World Cup qualifier – against Sierra Leone.

A 3-1 win at home gave Liberia a defendable advantage in the return, so despite losing 1-0 in Freetown they progressed to the group stage which begins in March. Butler's side were, however, eliminated from the 2021 AFCON preliminaries by Gambia on penalties, but he hopes that his decision to remain in Liberia throughout his stay will endear him to his new employers.

"I'm here for a year with an option for another year but you can't do any planning with a year's contract," says the 53-year-old. "I've hit the ground running and been coaching constantly since I've been here.

"I want to bring the average age down, get rid of the dead wood and bring on the up-and-coming players. So even if I'm only here a year then I've laid some foundations."

Among the players that Butler can call on are Newcastle United midfielder Mohammed Sangare and striker Sam Johnson of MLS side Real Salt Lake, and he wants to tap further into a diaspora which was scattered by a civil war that killed a quarter of a million Liberians.

"The country was ravaged; it's tragic what these people have been through. To get over that takes a long time," says Butler. "You don't just lose a few players, you lose a generation and it will take many years to get back to where they were in the 1990s."

Butler's number one target is Athletic Bilbao striker Inaki Williams, who was born in Spain after his mother fled the civil war. His one cap for *La Roja*, in 2015, was in a friendly so he's still eligible to play for Liberia.

"We are still trying but he's got aspirations of playing for Spain," says Butler. "If he hasn't played for Spain at 25, is he going to now?"

Williams committing to Liberia would be a huge bonus for Butler in a country that is trying to rebuild both itself and its football team. WS

➤ players "critically injured" according to the club.

Saturday November 30

WALES: The New Saints win 12-0 away at Airbus UK Broughton to equal the top flight's record score.

Sunday December 1

CHINESE TAIPEI: Tatung claim their third successive league title with a 2-0 victory over Taipower.
SOUTH KOREA: Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors leapfrog Ulsan Hyundai on the last day of the season as Son Jun-ho's goal against Gangwon, coupled with Ulsan's 4-1 home loss to Pohang Steelers, sees them win the title by virtue of goals scored.

Monday December 2

BALLON D'OR: Lionel Messi wins the men's award for a record sixth time, while Megan Rapinoe is the women's player of the year.
ITALY: Bottom of Serie A, Brescia sack Fabio Grosso after just three games and bring back Eugenio Corini, who they axed less than a month ago. Grosso lost all his games as coach and fell out with Mario Balotelli, who he dropped for a perceived lack of desire in training
USA: MLS put Inter Miami in the Eastern Conference, with Nashville in the Western Conference.

Tuesday December 3

FRANCE: Bordeaux's Ligue 1 game against Nimes is suspended for 25 minutes as fans protest against the club's ownership. They go on to win 6-0 when play resumes.

Wednesday December 4

CECAFA SENIOR CHALLENGE CUP: South Sudan and guest team DR Congo join Ethiopia in pulling out of the East African regional championship just three days ahead of the kick-off in Uganda as the competition is reduced from 12 teams to nine.
UZBEKISTAN: Pakhtakor add the inaugural League Cup to their Uzbek Cup and Super League successes, beating AGMK 6-2 in the Final.

Friday December 6

CHINA: Shanghai Shenhua score three second-half goals to overturn a first-leg deficit, beating Shandong Luneng 3-1 on aggregate to win the Chinese FA Cup for a fifth time.
ENGLAND: Chelsea can sign players in January after the Court of Arbitration for Sport halves their FIFA transfer ban to one window, which they served during the ➤

Japan

MIKE PLASTOW

F-Marinos triumph

Unbeaten run clinches title

Yokohama F-Marinos romped to a first J1 League title in 15 years, beating the defending champions, Kawasaki Frontale 4-1 away and then clinching the crown with a 3-0 victory at home to FC Tokyo, giving them a fourth championship in total.

The J.League provided another classic finale with F-Marinos only going top for the first time in their third-to-last game. There was no stopping them at the finish, though, as they wound up an 11-game unbeaten run from August to finish six points clear at the top.

With former Australia coach Ange Postecoglou in his second year at the helm, F-Marinos improved all season and looked by far the best team as they charged in at the finish on a run of seven straight wins. Postecoglou instilled a fast, attacking ethos in the team, with high full-backs and rapid penetration through the middle and on the wings. Thailand left-back Theerathon Bunmathan took a while to find his place but became a powerful driving force in the latter part of the season, while centre-back Shinnosuke Hatanaka typified the improvement in defence as well as attack and broke into Japan's national team.

F-Marinos forwards Teruhito Nagagawa and Marcos Junior led the scoring charts with 15 goals apiece, but Postecoglou was quick to credit Brazilian striker Edigar Junio, who scored 11 goals in the first half of the season, for having made this championship possible. The side slumped to three consecutive defeats in August after Edigar Junio broke a leg, against Kobe, and midfielder Jun Amano left for Belgian club Lokeren.

F-Marinos, though, responded with the inspired signings of centre-forward Erik from Botafogo – who scored eight goals in 12 games – and wide chance-maker Mateus on loan from Nagoya Grampus. Sweeping forward, the side became invincible, with Mateus on the left, Nakagawa on the right, and Erik as centre-forward supported by Marcos Junior.

It was all a big turnaround from 2018 when F-Marinos only avoided the relegation play-off on goal difference and were booed off the pitch by their fans at the end of a 2-1 home loss to Cerezo Osaka in their last game.

Kawasaki Frontale had been seeking a third successive league title and remained the hardest team to beat, with only six defeats all season, but they lost some of their cutting edge in front of goal, especially with veterans Kengo Nakamura and Yu Kobayashi making fewer appearances, and they drew almost as many as they won.

Kashima Antlers were in contention until the second-last round of games and briefly led with four games remaining, but their challenge fizzled out with

F-Marinos improved all season and looked by far the best team as they charged in at the finish on a run of seven straight wins

Champion...Ange Postecoglou lifts the league title

All over...Fernando Torres of Sagan Tosu (in blue)

losses to Kawasaki and Sanfrecce Hiroshima in their last two home games. The purchase of a 60 per cent stake in the club by Internet giant Mercari in July could bring some interesting developments next season.

Kashima's lost momentum initially looked more likely to benefit Tokyo, who were seeking a first J.League title. Their attacking game was again spearheaded by Diego Oliveira and a resurgent Kensuke Nagai, back in the national team for the first time since 2015. At just 17, Takefusa Kubo was inspirational in the first half of the season until his summer transfer to Real Madrid, while centre-half Kento Hashimoto and full-back Sei Muroya were rare domestic players in the national side.

But Tokyo also lost steam at the end of the season, and draws against struggling Shonan Bellmare and Urawa Reds left the path all clear for F-Marinos.

Matsumoto Yamaga and Jubilo Iwata were relegated, while Kashiwa Reysol and Yokohama FC secured the automatic promotion slots. Shonan Bellmare drew 1-1 with Tokushima Vortis in the promotion/relegation play-off and retained their place in the top flight.

The promotion of Yokohama FC promises not only the revival of Yokohama derbies – the club's one previous season in the top flight was in 2007 – but also the return of veterans Kazuyoshi Miura and Shunsuke Nakamura to the top flight. Miura came on late in the game against Ehime in Yokohama's last game of the season to extend his age record to 52 years, eight months and 29 days.

Despite the arrival of David Villa to join Andres Iniesta, Lukas Podolski and other members of their star-studded squad, Vissel Kobe never got into gear and even lost seven league games in a row through May before bringing Thorsten Fink in as their new boss. Villa did score a respectable 13 league goals in his last season before retiring but injuries made it hard to get all of the veterans on the pitch at the same time and Vissel eventually wound up eighth in the league.

Fernando Torres also hung up his boots at struggling Sagan Tosu after playing his last match, a 6-1 home defeat to Vissel Kobe in August.

Kawasaki Frontale had the consolation of winning their first League Cup, beating Hokkaido Consadole Sapporo 5-4 on penalties after a 3-3 draw. Urawa Reds, though deep in a relegation battle, made it to the AFC Champions League Final against Al Hilal of Saudi Arabia but couldn't repeat their 2017 success.

Yokohama F-Marinos will represent Japan in the 2020 Champions League, with Tokyo and Kashima Antlers starting the competition in the play-offs. The second automatic Champions League slot goes to the winners of the Emperor's Cup on New Year's Day. If Kashima win, their Champions League play-off slot will go to fourth-placed Kawasaki. WS

SEASON'S BEST

MANAGER OF THE YEAR
Ange POSTECOGLOU
(Yokohama F-Marinos)
The Australian swept the club to its first league title since 2004 and he compared winning the title to going to the cinema, saying: "The happy ending isn't the interesting part. I enjoy the bits where people doubt and question what I'm doing and don't mind if things don't go well. I know how it will end."

Blossomed...Teruhito Nakagawa

PLAYER OF THE YEAR
Teruhito NAKAGAWA
(Yokohama F-Marinos)
The 27-year-old's career was anything but stellar until this season. Loaned out to second-tier sides Machida and Fukuoka in 2016 and 2017, he has blossomed as a striker under Postecoglou. Joint-top scorer in the league, he was called up for the national team in December.

BEST YOUNG PLAYER
Ao TANAKA (Kawasaki Frontale)
An injury to Ryota Oshima in Kawasaki's third game of the season gave centre-half Tanaka his chance and he will be key for Japan at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. Man of the match against England at the Toulon Tournament, he was called up to the senior squad in December.

Gulf Cup

JOHN DUERDEN

Bahrain upset the odds

Qatar tournament goes ahead as planned

Asian football has often seen politics overshadow action on the pitch and it was no different during the 2019 Gulf Cup in Qatar. This time, however, it was all positive and a case of the beautiful game helping to put a chink in some barriers.

If it meant that Bahrain's first-ever triumph in the eight-team regional tournament did not quite get the international headlines it may have commanded otherwise, then so be it.

Just weeks ahead of the big kick-off it was uncertain as to whether the biennial competition would even take place at all.

The tournament was being staged by the 2022 World Cup hosts, but as three of the other seven teams – Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and United Arab Emirates – had cut off diplomatic relations with Qatar in 2017, there were concerns. The so-called "Qatar Blockade" has meant no direct flights and as little engagement as possible. Qatar had given up hosting rights to Kuwait in 2017 when it became apparent that without the other three that year's Gulf Cup would not go ahead.

> The next day was declared a national holiday by the Bahraini government

The prospect of the three agreeing to attend in 2019 did not look good at the start of the year after Qatar went to the 2019 Asian Cup in UAE and did not receive the warmest of welcomes.

So the mid-November announcement that the federations in Riyadh, Abu Dhabi and Manama had accepted invitations to participate went down well in Qatar and also bodes well for the 2022 World Cup. At the very least, for a host nation with a population of less than three million, Qatar needs its neighbours to get involved, even if their teams don't qualify.

While it all went pretty smoothly off the pitch, Qatar will be less than satisfied with what happened on it as they were knocked out at the semi-final stage.

That was something of a surprise as Qatar were so dominant at January's Asian Cup, scoring 19 goals and conceding just one on their way to a first continental title. Stars of that tournament such as top scorer Almoez Ali and newly named Asian Player of the Year Akram Afif were in action once again but could not prevent an opening game loss to Iraq.

Qatar hit back with 10 goals in their next two games, against Yemen and the UAE, but they were then beaten 1-0 by Saudi Arabia in the semi-finals.

The Saudis had won Group B after bouncing back from a loss to Kuwait to defeat Bahrain and Oman. Since Herve Renard was appointed in July, Saudi Arabia had been a little slow to find their rhythm but under the Frenchman – who led Zambia and Ivory Coast to the Africa Cup of Nations and Morocco at the 2018 World Cup – they are starting to take shape, with Abdullah Otayf, who has long had the potential to be one of the best midfielders in Asia, reaching new levels under Renard.

Saudi Arabia therefore went into the Final against their tiny neighbours Bahrain as hot favourites despite having lost in three of the previous five Finals. But Bahrain had other ideas. Helio Sousa arrived in Manama as a little-known Portuguese coach but left Doha with the trophy and plaudits, not least from the 2,000 Bahraini fans who jetted in for the Final.

After Saudi skipper Salman Al Faraj missed a first-half penalty, Mohamed Al Romaihi scored the only goal of the game, in the 69th minute, to give Bahrain a first win in their fifth Final.

And such was the excitement back home that it was no surprise when the following day was then declared a national holiday by the Bahraini government. WS

Joy...winning coach Helio Souza

Upset...Qatar's Ro-Ro (in red) and Ibrahim Bayesh of Iraq

➤ summer. Leicester City manager Brendan Rodgers ends speculation over a move to Arsenal by signing a new five-and-a-half-year contract.

Saturday December 7

ITALY: Juventus lose for the first time this season in Serie A, going down 3-1 at Lazio.
QATAR: FIFA is forced to switch the Club World Cup Final venue as the Education City Stadium in Doha is yet to hold any test events. Its games will now be staged at the city's Khalifa International Stadium.
SPAIN: Lionel Messi breaks Cristiano Ronaldo's record with a 35th La Liga hat-trick as Barcelona beat Mallorca 5-2.

Sunday December 8

PARAGUAY: Olimpia clinch the Clausura title with a 2-2 draw at home to Guarani.
SCOTLAND: Celtic have a man sent off as they win 1-0 in the League Cup Final against Rangers.
VENEZUELA: After the Clausura play-off Final first leg finished 1-1, Caracas draw 2-2 at Deportivo Tachira to win on away goals.

Monday December 9

RUSSIA: The World Anti-Doping Agency bans Russia from all major sporting events for four years, including the 2022 World Cup.

Tuesday December 10

AFC CHAMPIONS LEAGUE: Holders Al Hilal of Saudi Arabia are drawn in Group B and will face Uzbekistan's Pakhtakor and Al Ahli of the UAE next year as they set out to win a record fourth title.
BELGIUM: Genk's 17-year-old Maarten Vandevoordt becomes the youngest goalkeeper to start a Champions League game but has a torrid night as Napoli win 4-0.
FRANCE: World Cup-winning coach Didier Deschamps extends his contract with the national side until the end of the 2022 tournament in Qatar in a deal that will make him France's longest-ever serving boss.
NORTHERN IRELAND: Carrick Rangers defender Jerry Thompson passes away suddenly aged 24.
SOUTHEAST ASIAN GAMES: Sixty years after South Vietnam won gold in 1959, Vietnam claimed a first SEA Games men's football title since unification, beating Indonesia 3-0 in the Final in the Philippines.
SPAIN: At 17 years and 40 days, Ansu Fati becomes the youngest-ever goalscorer in the Champions League with Barcelona's winner in a 2-1 win away to Internazionale. WS

ESM XI

EUROPEAN SPORTS MEDIA

GOALKEEPERS

Marc-Andre TER STEGEN (Barcelona)	15
Samir HANDANOVIC (Internazionale)	4
Kasper SCHMEICHEL (Leicester City)	4
Jan OBLAK (Atletico Madrid)	3
Andre ONANA (Ajax)	2
Wojciech SZCZESNY (Juventus)	2
ADRIAN (Liverpool)	1
ALISSON (Liverpool)	1
David DE GEA (Manchester United)	1
EDERSON (Manchester City)	1
Lukas HRADECKY (Bayer Leverkusen)	1
Manuel NEUER (Bayern Munich)	1
Rui SILVA (Granada)	1
Tomas VACLIK (Sevilla)	1

DEFENDERS

Virgil VAN DIJK (Liverpool)	19
Trent ALEXANDER-ARNOLD (Liverpool)	11
Andrew ROBERTSON (Liverpool)	11
Stefan DE VRIJ (Internazionale)	7
Ben CHILWELL (Leicester City)	6
Mats HUMMELS (Borussia Dortmund)	5
Caglar SOYUNCU (Leicester City)	5
Leonardo BONUCCI (Juventus)	4
Diego GODIN (Internazionale)	4
Benjamin PAVARD (Bayern Munich)	4
Sergio RAMOS (Real Madrid)	4
Milan SKRINIAR (Internazionale)	4
Serge AURIER (Tottenham Hotspur)	3
Achraf HAKIMI (Borussia Dortmund)	3
Ricardo PERREIRA (Leicester City)	3
Nicolas TAGLIAFICO (Ajax)	3
Joshua KIMMICH (Bayern Munich)	2
Kalidou KOULIBALY (Napoli)	2
Renan LODI (Atletico Madrid)	2
MARCELO (Real Madrid)	2
Gerard PIQUE (Barcelona)	2
Salif SANE (Schalke)	2
Stevan SAVIC (Atletico Madrid)	2
Thiago SILVA (Paris Saint-Germain)	2
Chris SMALLING (Roma)	2
Kieran TRIPPIER (Atletico Madrid)	2
Raphael VARANE (Real Madrid)	2
Yunis ABDELHAMID (Reims)	1
David ALABA (Bayern Munich)	1
Jordi ALBA (Barcelona)	1
Marcos ALONSO (Chelsea)	1
Yeray ALVAREZ (Athletic Bilbao)	1
Youcef ATAL (Nice)	1
Cesar AZPILICUETA (Chelsea)	1
Sven BENDER (Bayer Leverkusen)	1
Juan BERNAT (Paris Saint-Germain)	1
Antonio CANDREVA (Internazionale)	1
Daniel CARVAJAL (Real Madrid)	1
Aurelien CHEDJOU (Amiens)	1
Juan CUADRADO (Juventus)	1
DAVID LUIZ (Arsenal)	1
Alfonso DAVIES (Bayern Munich)	1
Matthijs DE LIGT (Juventus)	1
Ruben DIAS (Benfica)	1
Victor DIAZ (Granada)	1
Nico ELVIDI (Borussia Monchengladbach)	1
FERNANDINHO (Manchester City)	1
Presnel KIMPEMBE (Paris Saint-Germain)	1
Robin KNOCHE (Wolfsburg)	1
Aleksandar KOLAROV (Roma)	1
Ibrahima KONATE (RB Leipzig)	1
Clement LENGLET (Barcelona)	1
Dejan LOVREN (Liverpool)	1
Joel MATIP (Liverpool)	1
Willi ORBAN (RB Leipzig)	1
PEPE (Porto)	1
Nelson SEMEDO (Barcelona)	1
John STONES (Manchester City)	1
Dayot UPAMECANO (RB Leipzig)	1
Kyle WALKER (Manchester City)	1

MIDFIELDERS

Kevin DE BRUYNE (Manchester City)	15
Angel DI MARIA (Paris Saint-Germain)	14
Stefano SENSI (Internazionale)	6
Hakim ZIYECH (Ajax)	6
Toni KROOS (Real Madrid)	5
Miralem PJANIC (Juventus)	5
Youri TIELEMANS (Leicester City)	5
Federico VALVERDE (Real Madrid)	5
Georginio WIJNALDUM (Liverpool)	4
Marcelo BROZOVIC (Internazionale)	3
Ilkay GUNDOGAN (Manchester City)	3
James MADDISON (Leicester City)	3
Wilfred NDIDI (Leicester City)	3
Philippe COUTINHO (Bayern Munich)	2
Bruno FERNANDES (Sporting CP)	2
Emil FORSBERG (RB Leipzig)	2
Amine HARIT (Schalke)	2
Mason MOUNT (Chelsea)	2
Martin ODEGAARD (Real Sociedad)	2
Marco VERRATTI (Paris Saint-Germain)	2
Dele ALLI (Tottenham Hotspur)	1
ARTHUR (Barcelona)	1
Laszlo BENES (Borussia Monchengladbach)	1
Sergio BUSQUETS (Barcelona)	1
CASEMIRO (Real Madrid)	1
Santi CAZORLA (Villarreal)	1
Frenkie DE JONG (Barcelona)	1
FABINHO (Liverpool)	1
FELIPE ANDERSON (West Ham United)	1
FERNANDINHO (Manchester City)	1
Alexander GOLOVIN (Monaco)	1
Papu GOMEZ (Atalanta)	1
Eden HAZARD (Real Madrid)	1
Jonas HOFMANN (Borussia M'gladbach)	1
N'Golo KANTE (Chelsea)	1
Lucas OCAMPOS (Sevilla)	1
Franck RIBERY (Fiorentina)	1
Marcel SABITZER (RB Leipzig)	1
Bernardo SILVA (Manchester City)	1
David SILVA (Manchester City)	1
Calvin STENGS (AZ)	1
Dusan TADIC (Ajax)	1
Hans VANAKEN (Club Brugge)	1
Donny VAN DE BEEK (Ajax)	1
Axel WITSEL (Borussia Dortmund)	1
Denis ZAKARIA (Borussia M'gladbach)	1

FORWARDS

Robert LEWANDOWSKI (Bayern Munich)	33
Lionel MESSI (Barcelona)	21
Cristiano RONALDO (Juventus)	7
Paulo DYBALA (Juventus)	4
Mauro ICARDI (Paris Saint-Germain)	4
Donyell MALEN (PSV)	4
Sadio MANE (Liverpool)	4
NEYMAR (Paris Saint-Germain)	4
Jamie VARDY (Leicester City)	4
Karim BENZEMA (Real Madrid)	3
Erling HAALAND (Red Bull Salzburg)	3
Ciro IMMOBILE (Lazio)	3
Lautaro MARTINEZ (Internazionale)	3
Islam SLIMANI (Monaco)	3
Kylian MBAPPE (Paris Saint-Germain)	2
Dries MERTENS (Napoli)	2
ROBERTO FIRMINO (Liverpool)	2
Jadon SANCHO (Borussia Dortmund)	2
Timo WERNER (RB Leipzig)	2
Sergio AGUERO (Manchester City)	1
Ansu FATI (Barcelona)	1
Romelu LUKAKU (Internazionale)	1
Quincy PROMES (Ajax)	1
Teemu PUKKI (Norwich City)	1
Marcus RASHFORD (Manchester United)	1
Raheem STERLING (Manchester City)	1
Luis SUAREZ (Barcelona)	1

HOW IT WORKS Every month, journalists from each member of the European Sports Media group select their first XI based on the best individual performances from Europe's top competitions. For details of how each ESM member voted, visit worldsoccer.com/esm11

Internationals

2022 WORLD CUP QUALIFIERS

ASIA SECTION

2nd round[1]

Group A

Nov14 - Male
Maldives 1 (N Hassan 90+3)
Philippines 2 (Ramsay 52, Strauss 68)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 2,700. **Ref:** Al Ali (Jor)

Nov14 - Dubai, UAE
Syria 2 (Omari 19, Zhang Linpeng og 76)
China 1 (Wu Lei 30)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 6,950. **Ref:** Kim Dae-yong (SKo)

Nov19 - Male
Maldives 3 (Samooh 23, T Nicklaw og 38, Ashfaq 90+1)
Guam 1 (Matkin 49)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 2,612. **Ref:** Yehia (Leb)

Nov19 - Dubai, UAE
Syria 1 (Al Salama 23)
Philippines 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 2,445. **Ref:** Arumughan (Ind)

WORLD CUP QUALS: ASIA – 2ND RND: GP A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Syria	5	5	0	0	14	4	15
China	4	2	1	1	13	2	7
Philippines	5	2	1	2	8	8	7
Maldives	5	2	0	3	6	10	6
Guam	5	0	0	5	2	19	0

Group B

Nov14 - Amman
Jordan 0
Australia 1 (Taggart 13)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 9,712. **Ref:** Fu (Chn)

Nov14 - Kuwait City
Kuwait 9 (Nasser 22, 59, Al Ebrahim 42, Al Faneeni 49, Al Mutawa 55, Zaid 62, Al Khaldi 73, Chen Wei-chuan og 77, Ajab 81)
Taiwan 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 8,400. **Ref:** Yaacob (Mly)

Nov19 - Amman
Jordan 5 (Faisal 4, 75, Ersan 25, Al Ajalin 43, Al Dardour 62)
Taiwan 0
HT: 3-0. **Att:** 2,260. **Ref:** Mohammed (UAE)

Nov19 - Thimphu, Bhutan
Nepal 0
Kuwait 1 (Al Mutawa 28)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 2,000. **Ref:** Al Yaqoubi (Oma)

WORLD CUP QUALS: ASIA – 2ND RND: GP B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Australia	4	4	0	0	16	1	12
Kuwait	5	3	1	1	17	3	10
Jordan	5	3	1	1	10	2	10
Nepal	5	1	0	4	2	16	3
Taiwan	5	0	0	5	2	25	0

Group C

Nov14 - Hong Kong
Hong Kong 0
Bahrain 0
Att: 4,541. **Ref:** Kim Dong-jin (SKo)

Nov14 - Amman,Jordan
Iraq 2 (M Ali 11, Abbas 90+2)
Iran 1 (Nourollahi 25)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 13,752. **Ref:** Perera (Sri)
Sent off: Shojaei (Iran) 81

Nov19 - Hong Kong
Hong Kong 2 (Ha 20, Roberto 83)
Cambodia 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 6,497. **Ref:** Shaban (Kuw)
Sent off: Soeuy (Cambodia) 78

Nov19 - Amman,Jordan
Iraq 0
Bahrain 0
Att: 10,366. **Ref:** Bin Jahari (Sin)

WORLD CUP QUALS: ASIA – 2ND RND: GP C

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Iraq	5	3	2	0	9	2	11
Bahrain	5	2	3	0	3	1	9
Iran	4	2	0	2	17	3	6
Hong Kong	5	1	2	2	3	5	5
Cambodia	5	0	1	4	1	22	1

Group D

Nov14 - Tashkent
Uzbekistan 2 (Shomurodov 16, Shukurov pen 56)
Saudi Arabia 3 (Al Faraj pen 23, 85, Al Dawsari 89)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 31,524. **Ref:** Sato (Jap)

Nov14 - Muharraq, Bahrain
Yemen 1 (Al Dahi 54)
Palestine 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 530. **Ref:** Makhadmeh (Jor)
Sent off: Abu Warda (Palestine) 34

Nov19 - Tashkent
Uzbekistan 2 (Shomurodov 18, 58)
Palestine 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 19,143. **Ref:** Shukralla (Bhn)

Nov19 - Muharraq, Bahrain
Yemen 1 (Al Gahwashi 85)
Singapore 2 (Ikhsan 19, Hafiz 52)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 650. **Ref:** Tojo (Jap)

WORLD CUP QUALS: ASIA – 2ND RND: GP D

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Uzbekistan	5	3	0	2	12	6	9
Saudi Arabia	4	2	2	0	8	4	8
Singapore	5	2	1	2	7	10	7
Yemen	5	1	2	2	6	11	5
Palestine	5	1	1	3	3	5	4

Group E

Nov14 - Dushanbe, Tajikistan
Afghanistan 1 (Nazary 45+1)
India 1 (Doungel 90+3)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 8,100. **Ref:** Yu (Tai)

Nov14 - Muscat
Oman 4 (Al Khaldi 48, R Al Alawi 68, A Al Alawi 78, Al Hidi 90+1)
Bangladesh 1 (Ahmed 81)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 24,000. **Ref:** Hattab (Syr)

Nov19 - Dushanbe, Tajikistan
Afghanistan 0
Qatar 1 (Akram Afif pen 76)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 6,000. **Ref:** Faizullin (Kyr)

Nov19 - Muscat
Oman 1 (Mohsin Al Ghassani 33)
India 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 24,250. **Ref:** Gamini (Sri)

WORLD CUP QUALS: ASIA – 2ND RND: GP E

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Qatar	5	4	1	0	11	1	13
Oman	5	4	0	1	11	4	12
Afghanistan	5	1	1	3	2	11	4
India	5	0	3	2	3	5	3
Bangladesh	4	0	1	3	2	8	1

Group F

Nov14 - Bishkek
Kyrgyzstan 0
Japan 2 (Minamino pen 41, Haraguchi 54)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 17,543. **Ref:** Al Hoish (Sau)

Nov14 - Mandalay
Myanmar 4 (Suan Lam Mang 10, 41, Aung Thu 48, Maung Maung Lwin 63)
Tajikistan 3 (M Dzhalilov pen 36, 76, Vosiyev 57)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 7,365. **Ref:** Tufayelieh (Syr)

Nov19 - Bishkek
Kyrgyzstan 1 (Kozubaev 83)
Tajikistan 1 (J Ergashev 17)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 15,873. **Ref:** Al Jassim (Qat)

Nov19 - Mandalay
Myanmar 1 (Hlaing Bo Bo 17)
Mongolia 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 17,468. **Ref:** Nasaruddin (Mly)

WORLD CUP QUALS: ASIA – 2ND RND: GP F

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Japan	4	4	0	0	13	0	12
Kyrgyzstan	5	2	1	2	10	5	7
Tajikistan	5	2	1	2	6	8	7
Myanmar	5	2	0	3	5	13	6
Mongolia	5	1	0	4	2	10	3

Group G

Nov14 - Kuala Lumpur
Malaysia 2 (Gan 26, Sumareh 57)
Thailand 1 (Chanathip 7)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 39,363. **Ref:** Sabah (Irq)

Nov14 - Hanoi
Vietnam 1 (Nguyen Tien Linh 44)
United Arab Emirates 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 37,879. **Ref:** Iida (Jap)
Sent off: Khalifa Mubarak (United Arab Emirates) 37

Nov19 - Kuala Lumpur
Malaysia 2 (Safawi 30, 73)
Indonesia 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 75,044. **Ref:** Faghani (Irn)

Nov19 - Hanoi
Vietnam 0
Thailand 0
Att: 40,000. **Ref:** Al Kaf (Oma)

WORLD CUP QUALS: ASIA – 2ND RND: GP G

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Vietnam	5	3	2	0	5	1	11
Malaysia	5	3	0	2	8	6	9
Thailand	5	2	2	1	6	3	8
UAE	4	2	0	2	8	4	6
Indonesia	5	0	0	5	3	16	0

Group H

Nov14 - Beirut
Lebanon 0
South Korea 0
Played behind closed doors. **Ref:** Sarray (Irq)

Nov14 - Ashgabat
Turkmenistan 3 (Titow 23, Amanow 73, Orazsahedow 88)
North Korea 1 (Han Kwang-song 90+3)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 26,500. **Ref:** Pu-udom (Tha)

Nov19 - Beirut
Lebanon 0
North Korea 0
Played behind closed doors. **Ref:** Baki (Oma)

Nov19 - Ashgabat
Turkmenistan 2 (Basimow 44, Annadurdyyew 59)
Sri Lanka 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 26,304. **Ref:** Al Adba (Qat)

WORLD CUP QUALS: ASIA – 2ND RND: GP H

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Turkmenistan	5	3	0	2	8	5	9
South Korea	4	2	2	0	10	0	8
Lebanon	5	2	2	1	5	3	8
North Korea	5	2	2	1	4	3	8
Sri Lanka	5	0	0	5	0	16	0

Remaining matchdays: *Mar 26, Mar 31, Jun 4, Jun 9 (all 2020) - each team will play a total of 8 games*

● *The 8 group winners and the 4 runners-up with the best record will qualify for the 3rd round. Qatar are participating in this stage of the qualifiers even though, as 2022 World Cup hosts, they have an automatic place in the finals; if they win their group or finish as one of the 4 runners-up with the best record, the place they would have taken in the next round of qualifiers will go to the runner-up with the 5th-best record*

[1]These qualifiers double as the 2nd round of qualifiers for the 2023 Asian Cup - the 8 group winners and the 4 runners-up with the best record will qualify for the 24-team finals; the remaining countries will play further qualifiers to decide which of them will take the remaining12 places at the finals

EURO 2020 QUALIFIERS

Group A

Nov14 - Plzen
Czech Republic 2 (Kral 71, Celustka 79)
Kosovo 1 (Nuhiu 50)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 10,986. **Ref:** Rocchi (Ita)
Czech Republic: Vaclik - Coufal, Celustka, Brabec, Boril, Kral, Soucek, Masopust (Sevcik 76), Darida, Jankto (Kaderabek 90+1), Krmencik (Ondrasek 61).
Kosovo: Muric - Vojvoda, Rrahmani, Aliti, Kololli, Rashkaj (Halimi 46), V Berisha, Hadergjonaj (Zhegrova 77), Celina (Rashani 85), Rashica, Nuhiu.

Nov14 - London
England 7 (Oxlade-Chamberlain 11, Kane 19, 24, 37, Rashford 30, Sofranac og 66, Abraham 84)
Montenegro 0
HT: 5-0. **Att:** 77,277. **Ref:** Mateu Lahoz (Spa)
England: Pickford - Alexander-Arnold, Stones, Maguire, Chilwell, Oxlade-Chamberlain (Maddison 56), Winks, Mount (Gomez 70), Sancho, Kane (Abraham 57), Rashford.
Montenegro: Mijatovic - Vesovic, Sofranac, Simic, Radunovic (Raspopovic 46), Hocko, Lagator, Vukcevic, Jovovic (B Jankovic 65), Haksabanovic (Boljevic 74), Beciraj.

Nov17 - Sofia
Bulgaria 1 (Bozhikov 56)
Czech Republic 0
HT: 0-0. *Played behind closed doors.*
Ref: Karasev (Rus)
Bulgaria: Georgiev - S Popov, Terziev, Bozhikov, Zanev, Kostadinov, Malinov (Tsvetkov 89), Despodov (Kraev 69), I Popov, Wanderson (Nedelev 73), Marcelinho.
Czech Republic: Kolar - Kaderabek, Celustka, Kudela, Boril, Soucek, Kral (Husbauer 71), Sevcik (Masopust 65), Darida, Jankto, Ondrasek (Dolezal 79).

Nov17 - Pristina
Kosovo 0
England 4 (Winks 32, Kane 79, Rashford 83, Mount 90+1)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 12,326. **Ref:** Gil (Pol)
Kosovo: Muric - Vojvoda, Rrahmani, Aliti, Kololli, Dresevic, Hadergjonaj (Zhegrova 73), Celina, V Berisha (Halimi 65), Rashica, Nuhiu (Rashani 82).
England: Pope - Alexander-Arnold (Tomori 84), Maguire, Mings, Chilwell, Oxlade-Chamberlain (Mount 73), Rice, Winks, Sterling, Kane, Hudson-Odoi (Rashford 59).

EURO 2020 QUALIFIERS – GROUP A – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
England (QF)	8	7	0	1	37	6	21
Czech Rep (QF)	8	5	0	3	13	11	15
Kosovo	8	3	2	3	13	16	11
Bulgaria	8	1	3	4	6	17	6
Montenegro	8	0	3	5	3	22	3

Group B

Nov14 - Faro/Loule
Portugal 6 (Cristiano Ronaldo pen 7, 22, 65, Pizzi 52, Goncalo Paciencia 56, Bernardo Silva 63)
Lithuania 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 18,534. **Ref:** Buquet (Fra)
Portugal: Rui Patricio - Ricardo Pereira, Jose Fonte, Ruben Dias, Mario Rui, Ruben Neves, Bruno Fernandes (Joao Moutinho 72), Pizzi, Bernardo Silva (Bruma 66), Cristiano Ronaldo (Diogo Jota 83), Goncalo Paciencia.
Lithuania: Setkus - Mikoliunas, Palionis, Girdvainis, Andriuskevicius, Slivka, Simkus, Kuklys (D Matulevicius 57), Novikovas, Cernych (Kazlauskas 80), Golubickas (Lasickas 72).

Nov14 - Belgrade
Serbia 3 (A Mitrovic 11, 43, Radonjic 70)
Luxembourg 2 (Rodrigues 54, Turpel 75)
HT: 2-0. *Played behind closed doors.*
Ref: Gozubuyuk (Hol)
Serbia: Dmitrovic - Milenkovic, Nikola Maksimovic, Kolarov, Mladenovic, Milivojevic, Nemanja Maksimovic, Tadic (Lukic 90+2), Milinkovic-Savic (Radonjic 62), Ljajic (Djuricic 79), A Mitrovic.
Luxembourg: Moris - Jans, Chanot, Hall, Carlson, Gerson, V Thill (Sinani 79), Philipps (Skenderovic 46), O Thill (Turpel 61), Rodrigues, Deville.

Nov17 - Luxembourg
Luxembourg 0
Portugal 2 (Bruno Fernandes 39, Cristiano Ronaldo 86)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 8,000. **Ref:** Gil Manzano (Spa)
Luxembourg: Moris - Jans, Chanot, Gerson, Carlson, Skenderovic, Barreiro (Sinani 74), Turpel (O Thill 59), V Thill (Joachim 82), Rodrigues, Deville.
Portugal: Rui Patricio - Ricardo Pereira, Jose Fonte, Ruben Dias, Raphael Guerreiro, Danilo Pereira, Pizzi (Joao Moutinho 62), Bruno Fernandes (Ruben Neves 90), Bernardo Silva, Cristiano Ronaldo, Andre Silva (Diogo Jota 71).

Nov17 - Belgrade
Serbia 2 (Tadic pen 9, A Mitrovic 56)
Ukraine 2 (Yaremchuk 32, Besedin 90+3)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 4,457. **Ref:** Madden (Sco)
Serbia: Rajkovic - Milenkovic, Nikola Maksimovic, Kolarov, Rodic, Nemanja Maksimovic (Milivojevic 76), Gudelj, Radonjic (Milinkovic-Savic 82), Tadic, Ljajic (Gacinovic 69), A Mitrovic.
Ukraine: Pyatov - Karavaev, Kryvtsov, Matviyenko, Mykolenko, Sydorchuk, Tsygankov (Besedin 77), Kovalenko (Shepelev 77), Malinovskyi (Shakhov 88), Yaremchuk, Yarmolenko.

EURO 2020 QUALIFIERS – GROUP B – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ukraine (QF)	8	6	2	0	17	4	20
Portugal (QF)	8	5	2	1	22	6	17
Serbia	8	4	2	2	17	17	14
Luxembourg	8	1	1	6	7	16	4
Lithuania	8	0	1	7	5	25	1

Group C

Nov16 - Monchengladbach
Germany 4 (Ginter 41, Goretzka 49, Kroos 55, 83)
Belarus 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 33,164. **Ref:** Grinfeld (Isr)
Germany: Neuer - Klostermann, Ginter, Koch, Schulz, Gundogan, Kimmich, Kroos, Goretzka, Gnabry (Waldschmidt 84; Rudy 90+1), Werner (Brandt 68).
Belarus: Gutor - Matveichik, Martynovich, Naumov, Polyakov, Kovalev (Skavysh 78), Maevski, Dragun, Nekhaychik (Bessmertny 84), Stasevich, Laptev (Lisakovich 68).

Nov16 - Belfast
Northern Ireland 0
Holland 0
Att: 18,404. **Ref:** Marciniak (Pol)
Northern Ireland: Peacock-Farrell - Dallas, Cathcart, J Evans, Lewis (Thompson 81), C Evans (McGinn 70), Davis, Whyte, McNair, Saville (Smith 58), Magennis.
Holland: Cillessen - Veltman, De Ligt, Van Dijk, Blind, De Roon (Propper 36), F De Jong, Berghuis (L De Jong 65), Van de Beek, Promes, Babel (Ake 90).

Nov19 - Frankfurt
Germany 6 (Gnabry 19, 47, 60, Goretzka 43, 73, Brandt 90+1)
Northern Ireland 1 (Smith 7)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 42,855. **Ref:** Del Cerro Grande (Spa)
Germany: Ter Stegen - Klostermann (Stark 65), Can, Tah, Hector, Kimmich, Kroos, Goretzka (Serdar 73), Gundogan, Brandt, Gnabry (Amiri 80).
Northern Ireland: Peacock-Farrell - Smith, Cathcart, Flanagan, Ferguson, Davis, C Evans (McLaughlin 65), McNair (Boyce 77), Thompson, Saville, Magennis (Lavery 83).

Nov19 - Amsterdam
Holland 5 (Wijnaldum 6, 66, 79, Ake 19, Boadu 87)
Estonia 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 50,386. **Ref:** Massa (Ita)
Holland: Cillessen - Promes, De Ligt, Ake, Van Aanholt, Propper, F De Jong (Strootman 75), Stengs, Wijnaldum, Depay (Boadu 46), L De Jong (Weghorst 63).
Estonia: Lepmets - Teniste (Baranov 61), Tamm, Mets, Kallaste, Zenjov (Liivak 76), Antonov, Ainsalu, Ojamaa (Kait 83), Vassiljev, Sorga.

EURO 2020 QUALIFIERS – GROUP C – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Germany (QF)	8	7	0	1	30	7	21
Holland (QF)	8	6	1	1	24	7	19
N Ireland	8	4	1	3	9	13	13
Belarus	8	1	1	6	4	16	4
Estonia	8	0	1	7	2	26	1

Group D

Nov15 - Copenhagen
Denmark 6 (Skov 12, 64, Gytkjaer 47, Braithwaite 51, Eriksen 85, 90+3)
Gibraltar 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 24,033. **Ref:** Vad (Hun)
Denmark: Schmeichel - Wass, Kjaer, M Jorgensen, J Larsen (Christensen 78), Schone (Hojbjerg 54), Delaney, Skov, Eriksen, Braithwaite (Dolberg 54), Gytkjaer.
Gibraltar: Goldwin - Sergeant, R Chipolina, J Chipolina, Mascarenhas-Olivero, Casciaro, Walker, Mouelhi (Barnett 65), Badr (Andrew Hernandez 65), Britto, De Barr (Styche 72).

Nov15 - St Gallen
Switzerland 1 (Itten 77)
Georgia 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 16,400. **Ref:** Makkelie (Hol)
Switzerland: Sommer - Lichtsteiner, Elvedi, Akanji, Rodriguez, Steffen, Fernandes (Sow 84), Zakaria, Xhaka, Vargas (Fassnacht 78), Ajeti (Itten 71).
Georgia: Loria - Kakabadze, Kashia, Grigalava, Khocholava, Kankava, Kiteishvili (Papunashvili 84), Shengelia, Qazaishvili, Davitashvili (Gvilia 85), Kvilitaia (Lobjanidze 82).

Nov18 - Gibraltar
Gibraltar 1 (Styche 74)
Switzerland 6 (Itten 10, 84, Vargas 50, Fassnacht 57, Benito 75, Xhaka 86)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 2,079. **Ref:** Millot (Fra)
Gibraltar: Coleing - Sergeant, Mouelhi, R Chipolina, J Chipolina, Britto, Casciaro (Styche 61), Barnett, Badr (Pons 85), De Barr (Coombes 61), Walker.
Switzerland: Sommer - Elvedi, Akanji (Comert 65), Rodriguez, Lang, Zakaria (Sow 60), Xhaka, Benito, Fassnacht, Itten, Vargas (Aebischer 85).

Nov18 - Dublin
Republic of Ireland 1 (Doherty 85)
Denmark 1 (Braithwaite 73)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 50,000. **Ref:** Brych (Ger)
Republic of Ireland: Randolph - Doherty, Duffy, Egan (Clark 46), Stevens, Whelan (Maguire 82), Hourihane (Robinson 68), Browne, Hendrick, McClean, McGoldrick.
Denmark: Schmeichel - Dalsgaard, Kjaer, M Jorgensen, J Larsen, Poulsen, Delaney (Hojbjerg 13), Schone (Christensen 84), Braithwaite, Eriksen, Cornelius (Dolberg 33).

EURO 2020 QUALIFIERS – GROUP D – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Switz'land (QF)	8	5	2	1	19	6	17
Denmark (QF)	8	4	4	0	23	6	16
Rep of Ireland	8	3	4	1	7	5	13
Georgia	8	2	2	4	7	11	8
Gibraltar	8	0	0	8	3	31	0

Group E

Nov16 - Baku
Azerbaijan 0
Wales 2 (Moore 10, Wilson 34)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 8,622. **Ref:** Aytekin (Ger)
Azerbaijan: Balayev - Pashayev, Mustafazade, B Huseynov, Krivotsyuk (Khalilzade 46), Abdullayev (Ramazanov 64), Nazarov (C Huseynov 82), Garayev, Richard Almeida, Rahimov, Sheydayev.
Wales: Hennessey - C Roberts, Lockyer, Mepham, B Davies, Ampadu (Vaulks 88), Morrell, Bale (Ramsey 60), Wilson, James (Matondo 82), Moore.

Nov16 - Rijeka
Croatia 3 (Vlasic 56, Petkovic 60, Perisic 74)
Slovakia 1 (Bozenik 32)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 8,212. **Ref:** Turpin (Fra)
Croatia: Livakovic - Jedvaj, Caleta-Car, Peric, Barisic, Modric, Brozovic, Rebic (Brekalo 54), Vlasic (Kovacic 75), Perisic (Orsic 81), Petkovic.
Slovakia: Dubravka - Pekarik, Vavro, Skriniar, Hancko, Kucka (Hrosovsky 79), Lobotka, Hamsik, Rusnak (Haraslin 63), Bozenik (Duris 72), Mak. *Sent off: Mak 66.*

Nov19 - Trnava
Slovakia 2 (Bozenik 19, Hamsik 86)
Azerbaijan 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 7,825. **Ref:** Boiko (Ukr)
Slovakia: Dubravka - Pekarik, Gyomber, Skriniar, Hancko, Kucka (Duda 85), Lobotka, Hamsik, Bero, Bozenik (Mraz 77), Haraslin (Duris 71).
Azerbaijan: Balayev - A Huseynov, Mustafazade, B Huseynov, Krivotsyuk (Khalilzade 72), Garayev, Eddy (Camalov 46), Isgandarli, C Huseynov (Renat Dadashov 79), Rahimov, Sheydayev.

Nov19 - Cardiff
Wales 2 (Ramsey 15, 47)
Hungary 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 31,762. **Ref:** Hategan (Rom)
Wales: Hennessey - C Roberts, Lockyer, Mepham, B Davies, Allen, Morrell (Ampadu 50), Bale (Wilson 88), Ramsey, James, Moore.
Hungary: Gulacsi - Lovrencsics, Barath, Lang, Z Nagy, Patkai, A Nagy (Kovacs 60), Dzsudzsak (Varga 72), Szoboszlai, Sallai (Holender 83), Adam Szalai.

EURO 2020 QUALIFIERS – GROUP E – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Croatia (QF)	8	5	2	1	17	7	17
Wales (QF)	8	4	2	2	10	6	14
Slovakia	8	4	1	3	13	11	13
Hungary	8	4	0	4	8	11	12
Azerbaijan	8	0	1	7	5	18	1

Group F

Nov15 - Oslo
Norway 4 (Reginiussen 4, Fossum 8, Sorloth 62, 65)
Faroe Islands 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 10,400. **Ref:** Jovic (Cro)
Norway: Jarstein - Elabdellaoui, Reginiussen, Ajer, Aleesami, Fossum, Berge (Ulvestad 84), Henriksen (Daehli 70), Selnaes, Sorloth, King (T Elyounoussi 78).
Faroe Islands: G Nielsen - Faero, Gregersen, Vatnsdal, Rolantsson, B Olsen, Baldvinsson, Jonsson, Vatnhamar (Bartalsstovu 78), Edmundsson (K Olsen 71), Bjartalid (Frederiksberg 71).

Nov15 - Bucharest
Romania 0
Sweden 2 (Berg 18, Quaison 34)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 49,678. **Ref:** Orsato (Ita)
Romania: Tatarusanu - Mogos, Rus, Nedelcearu, Bancu, Deac (Hagi 46), Baluta, Stanciu (Alibec 72), Mitrita, Puscas, Keseru (Coman 57).
Sweden: Olsen - Lustig, Lindelof, Granqvist, Bengtsson, Sebastian Larsson (Svensson 69), K Olsson, Ekdal, Forsberg, Berg (Isak 78), Quaison.

Nov15 - Cadiz
Spain 7 (Morata 23, Cazorla 41, Pau Torres 62, Sarabia 63, Olmo 69, Gerard Moreno 71, Jesus Navas 85)
Malta 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 19,773. **Ref:** Kassai (Hun)
Spain: Pau Lopez - Jesus Navas, Albiol, Sergio Ramos (Pau Torres 60), Bernat, Thiago, Rodri, Cazorla (Paco Alcacer 53), Gerard Moreno, Morata (Olmo 66), Sarabia.
Malta: Bonello - Corbalan (Micallef 33), J Caruana, Agius, Z Muscat, Pisani (Grech 75), Paiber, D Vella, R Muscat (T Caruana 63), Mbong, Nwoko.

Nov18 - Valletta
Malta 1 (P Fenech 40)
Norway 2 (King 7, Sorloth 62)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 2,708. **Ref:** Aghayev (Aze)
Malta: Bonello - Borg (Apap 74), Agius, Z Muscat, Mbong, P Fenech, D Vella (Effiong 61), Zerafa, R Muscat (N Muscat 70), Nwoko, Mifsud.
Norway: Nyland - Svensson (T Elyounoussi 65), Reginiussen, Ajer, Meling, Daehli (Elabdellaoui 46), Berge, Henriksen, Fossum, King (Ulvestad 89), Sorloth.

Nov18 - Madrid
Spain 5 (Fabian 8, Gerard Moreno 33, 43, Rus og 45+1, Oyarzabal 90+2)
Romania 0
HT: 4-0. **Att:** 36,198. **Ref:** Kulbakov (Bls)
Spain: Kepa - Carvajal, Sergio Ramos (Albiol 62), Inigo Martinez, Gaya, Fabian, Busquets, Saul, Gerard Moreno (Oyarzabal 56), Morata, Cazorla (Paco Alcacer 67).
Romania: Tatarusanu - Benzar, Rus, Nedelcearu, Tosca, Baluta, Marin (Cicaldau 65), Hagi (Nistor 73), Stanciu, Coman (Mitrita 56), Puscas.

Nov18 - Stockholm
Sweden 3 (Andersson 29, Svanberg 72, Guidetti 80)
Faroe Islands 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 19,737. **Ref:** Jug (Sln)
Sweden: Nordfeldt - Danielson, Jansson, Helander, Gagliolo, Sema (Kulusevski 65), Svanberg, K Olsson, Tankovic, Andersson (Guidetti 65), Isak.
Faroe Islands: G Nielsen - Vatnsdal, Gregersen, Baldvinsson, Rolantsson, B Olsen, Vatnhamar, Davidsen, Edmundsson (Frederiksberg 89), K Olsen (Johannesen 74), Bjartalid (Bartalsstovu 46).

EURO 2020 QUALIFIERS – GROUP F – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Spain (QF)	10	8	2	0	31	5	26
Sweden (QF)	10	6	3	1	23	9	21
Norway	10	4	5	1	19	11	17
Romania	10	4	2	4	17	15	14
Faroe Islands	10	1	0	9	4	30	3
Malta	10	1	0	9	3	27	3

Group G

Nov16 - Vienna
Austria 2 (Alaba 7, Lainer 48)
North Macedonia 1 (Stojanovski 90+3)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 41,100. **Ref:** Oliver (Eng)
Austria: Schlager - Lainer, Dragovic, Hinteregger, Ulmer, Baumgartlinger, Laimer (Ilsanker 90), Lazaro (Trimmel 79), Sabitzer, Alaba (Gregoritsch 90+2), Arnautovic.
North Macedonia: Dimitrievski - Ristovski, Mladenovski (Zajkov 46), Velkovski, Toshevski (Avramovski 62), Spirovski, Bardhi, Ristevski, Kostadinov, Elmas, Trajkovski (Stojanovski 13).

Nov16 - Jerusalem
Israel 1 (Dabbur 88)
Poland 2 (Krychowiak 4, Piatek 54)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 16,700. **Ref:** Gestranius (Fin)
Israel: Marciano - Dasa, Taha (Haziza 42), Tibi, Bitton, Ben Harush (Menachem 65), Natcho, Glazer, Kayal (Elmkies 79), Dabbur, Zahavi.
Poland: Szczesny - Kedziora, Glik, Bednarek, Reca, Bielik, Krychowiak (Furman 84), Frankowski, Zielinski, Szymanski (Lewandowski 63), Piatek (Klich 70).

Nov16 - Ljubljana
Slovenia 1 (Tarasovs og 53)
Latvia 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 11,224. **Ref:** Petrescu (Rom)
Slovenia: Oblak - Stojanovic, Aljaz Struna, Mevlja, Jokic, Ilicic, Krhin (Bijol 74), Kurtic, Verbic (Bezjak 90+1), Vuckic (Zajc 62), Sporar.
Latvia: Steinbors - Savalnieks, Dubra, Maksimenko, Jurkovskis, Tarasovs, Oss, D Ikaunieks (Uldrikis 72), Fjodorovs, Gutkovskis (Laizans 85), Kamess (Punculs 88).

Nov19 - Riga
Latvia 1 (Oss 65)
Austria 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 2,781. **Ref:** Hernandez (Spa)
Latvia: Steinbors - Savalnieks, Dubra, Maksimenko, Jurkovskis, Fjodorovs, Grjaznovs (Cernomordijs 90+2), Oss, Kamess, D Ikaunieks (Tarasovs 89), Uldrikis (Gutkovskis 70).
Austria: Pervan - Trimmel, Posch, Dragovic, Wober, Baumgartlinger (Onisiwo 46), Ilsanker (Ranftl 77), Goiginger (Hinterseer 69), Grillitsch, Schaub, Gregoritsch.

Nov19 - Skopje
North Macedonia 1 (Nikolov 45+2)
Israel 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 5,573. **Ref:** Valeri (Ita)
North Macedonia: Dimitrievski - Ristovski, Musliu, Velkovski (Zajkov 72), Ristevski, Nikolov, Bardhi, Kostadinov, Pandev (Avramovski 79), Elmas, Stojanovski (Nestorovski 60).
Israel: Harush - Dasa (Dgani 41), Tibi, Bitton, Menachem, Natcho, Glazer, Elmkies (Haziza 59), Saba (Weissman 68), Zahavi, Dabbur.

Nov19 - Warsaw
Poland 3 (Szymanski 3, Lewandowski 54, Goralski 81)
Slovenia 2 (Matavz 14, Ilicic 61)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 53,946. **Ref:** Siebert (Ger)
Poland: Szczesny - Piszczek (Kedziora 45+3), Glik (Jedrzejczyk 7), Bednarek, Reca, Goralski, Krychowiak, Szymanski (Jozwiak 86), Zielinski, Grosicki, Lewandowski.
Slovenia: Oblak - Stojanovic, Blazic, Mevlja, Balkovec, Krhin, Ilicic, Bijol (Zajc 72), Kurtic, Verbic (Rep 86), Matavz (Vuckic 89).
Sent off: Kurtic 86.

EURO 2020 QUALIFIERS – GROUP G – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Poland (QF)	10	8	1	1	18	5	25
Austria (QF)	10	6	1	3	19	9	19
N Macedonia	10	4	2	4	12	13	14
Slovenia	10	4	2	4	16	11	14
Israel	10	3	2	5	16	18	11
Latvia	10	1	0	9	3	28	3

Group H

Nov14 - Elbasan
Albania 2 (Balaj 6, Manaj 55)
Andorra 2 (C Martinez 18, 48)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 4,260. **Ref:** Tohver (Est)
Albania: Berisha - Ismajli, Gjimshiti, Veseli, Ramadani (Seferi 73), Roshi, Memushaj, Ndoj (Bare 60), Trashi (Hysaj 46), Balaj, Manaj.
Andorra: Gomes - Jesus Rubio (Rodriguez 71), E Garcia, Llovera, San Nicolas, Clemente, Vales, Moreno, Cervos, C Martinez (Fernandez 79), Alaez (A Martinez 89).

Nov14 - Paris
France 2 (Varane 35, Giroud pen 79)
Moldova 1 (Rata 9)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 64,367. **Ref:** Mazeika (Lit)
France: Mandanda - Pavard, Varane, Lenglet, Digne, Kante, Tolisso, Mbappe, Griezmann, Coman (Lemar 88), Giroud.
Moldova: Koselev - Jardan (Graur 68), Craciun, Posmac, Armas, Platica, Carp, Cociuc, Ionita, Ginsari (Milinceanu 74), Rata (Patras 81).

Nov14 - Istanbul
Turkey 0
Iceland 0
Att: 48,329. **Ref:** Taylor (Eng)
Turkey: Mert Gunok - Mehmet Celik (Bayram 90+4), Merih, Caglar, Cengiz Umut, Mahmut, Okay, Ozan Tufan, Cengiz Under (Yusuf 81), Burak, Calhanoglu (Ayhan 87).
Iceland: Halldorsson - Palsson, Arnason, R Sigurdsson, Skulason (Anderson 85), Bodvarsson, G Sigurdsson, B Bjarnason, Traustason (Magnusson 63), Sigthorsson, Finnbogason (A Sigurdsson 24).

Nov17 - Tirana
Albania 0
France 2 (Tolisso 9, Griezmann 30)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 19,228. **Ref:** Vincic (Sln)
Albania: Berisha - Hysaj (Trashi 82), Veseli, Dermaku, Gjimshiti, Lenjani (Roshi 46), Bare, Gjasula, Qose (Memushaj 46), Balaj, Manaj.
France: Mandanda - Varane, Lenglet, Kimpembe, Dubois (Pavard 88), Sissoko, Tolisso, Mendy (Digne 75), Griezmann, Giroud, Ben Yedder (Fekir 85).

Nov17 - Andorra La Vella
Andorra 0
Turkey 2 (Enes 17, pen 21)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 2,357. **Ref:** Kruzliak (Slk)
Andorra: Gomes (Pol 87) - San Nicolas, Lima, Llovera, Cervos, A Martinez, Vales, Rebes, Clemente (Jordi Rubio 85), Alaez (Rodriguez 71), C Martinez.
Turkey: Ugurcan - Ozan Kabak, Ayhan, Merih (Mert Cetin 80), Sangare, Yusuf, Ozan Tufan, Calhanoglu (Ozcan 60), Bayram, Kutucu (Emre Kilinc 85), Enes.

Nov17 - Chisinau
Moldova 1 (Milinceanu 56)
Iceland 2 (B Bjarnason 17, G Sigurdsson 65)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 6,742. **Ref:** Kralovec (CzR)
Moldova: Koselev - Rata, Craciun, Armas, Focsa, Carp (Cojocari 90), Ionita, Cociuc, Platica, Ginsari (Graur 83), Milinceanu (Damascan 60).
Iceland: Halldorsson - Palsson, Ingason, R Sigurdsson, Skulason, A Sigurdsson, G Sigurdsson, B Bjarnason (Magnusson 87), Anderson (Fridjonsson 55), Bodvarsson, Sigthorsson (Kjartansson 29).

EURO 2020 QUALIFIERS – GROUP H – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
France (QF)	10	8	1	1	25	6	25
Turkey (QF)	10	7	2	1	18	3	23
Iceland	10	6	1	3	14	11	19
Albania	10	4	1	5	16	14	13
Andorra	10	1	1	8	3	20	4
Moldova	10	1	0	9	4	26	3

Group I

Nov16 - Nicosia
Cyprus 1 (Efrem 47)
Scotland 2 (Christie 12, McGinn 53)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 7,595. **Ref:** Lechner (Aut)
Cyprus: Pardo - Demetriou, Karo (Kastanos 42), Merkis, Kousoulos, N Ioannou, Papoulis, Kyriakou (Theodorou 77), Kosti, Efrem (Spoljaric 74), Sotiriou.
Scotland: Marshall - Palmer, Gallagher, McKenna, Taylor, Christie (Devlin 90+2), Jack, C McGregor, Forrest (Burke 72), McGinn, Naismith (McBurnie 62).

Nov16 - St Petersburg
Russia 1 (Dzhikiya 79)
Belgium 4 (T Hazard 19, E Hazard 33, 40, Lukaku 72)
HT: 0-3. **Att:** 53,317. **Ref:** Dias (Por)
Russia: Guilherme - Fernandes, Semenov, Dzhikiya, Petrov, Ozdoev, Zobnin (Kuzyaev 62), Ionov, Aleksei Miranchuk, Zhirkov (Bakaev 50), Dzyuba (Komlichenko 80).
Belgium: Courtois - Alderweireld, Boyata, Vermaelen (Denayer 67), Castagne, De Bruyne, Witsel, T Hazard, Mertens (Tielemans 52), E Hazard, Lukaku (Batshuayi 77).

Nov16 - Serravalle
San Marino 1 (Berardi 77)
Kazakhstan 3 (Zainutdinov 6, Suyumbayev 22, Schetkin 26)
HT: 0-3. **Att:** 643. **Ref:** Palabiyik (Tur)
San Marino: S Benedettini - Manuel Battistini, Brolli, D Simoncini, Grandoni (Ceccaroli 80), Mularoni, E Golinucci, A Golinucci (Lunadei 60), Palazzi, Nanni (Hirsch 64), Berardi.
Kazakhstan: Nepohodov - Marochkin, Maliy, Shomko, Vorogovskiy (Miroshnichenko 18), Kuat, Tagybergen (Fedin 66), Suyumbayev, Zainutdinov, Islamkhan, Schetkin (Aimbetov 73).

Nov19 - Brussels
Belgium 6 (Benteke 16, 68, De Bruyne 36, 41, Carrasco 44, Christoforou og 51)
Cyprus 1 (N Ioannou 14)
HT: 4-1. **Att:** 40,568. **Ref:** Burchardt (Den)
Belgium: Mignolet - Alderweireld, Denayer, Cobbaut, T Hazard, Vanaken, Tielemans, Carrasco, De Bruyne (Praet 68), Benteke (Origi 79), E Hazard (Verschaeren 64).
Cyprus: Michael - Kyriakou, Christoforou, Merkis, N Ioannou (Kousoulos 67), Wheeler, Spoljaric (Efrem 79), Artymatas, Kastanos, Kosti (Papoulis 81), Sotiriou.

Nov19 - Serravalle
San Marino 0
Russia 5 (Kuzyaev 3, Petrov 19, Aleksei Miranchuk 49, Ionov 56, Komlichenko 78)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 1,604. **Ref:** Arnason (Ice)
San Marino: A Simoncini - D'Addario (Tomassini 64), F Vitaioli, D Simoncini, Palazzi, Lunadei, Censoni, Giardi, Gasperoni (Manuel Battistini 46), Berardi, Bernardi (Hirsch 61).
Russia: Shunin - Petrov, Belyaev, Dzhikiya, Kudryashov, Ozdoev (Zobnin 59), Kuzyaev, Ionov (Golovin 59), Aleksei Miranchuk (Komlichenko 65), Bakaev, Dzyuba.

Nov19 - Glasgow
Scotland 3 (McGinn 48, 90+1, Naismith 64)
Kazakhstan 1 (Zainutdinov 34)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 19,515. **Ref:** Nijhuis (Hol)
Scotland: Marshall - Palmer, Gallagher, McKenna, Taylor, Jack, C McGregor, Christie (Fleck 83), McGinn (Armstrong 90+1), Forrest, Naismith (Burke 77).
Kazakhstan: Nepohodov - Marochkin, Maliy, Logvinenko, Suyumbayev, Pertsukh (Kuat 74), Abiken, Shomko, Zainutdinov, Islamkhan (Fedin 74), Schetkin (Aimbetov 83).

EURO 2020 QUALIFIERS – GROUP I – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Belgium (QF)	10	10	0	0	40	3	30
Russia (QF)	10	8	0	2	33	8	24
Scotland	10	5	0	5	16	19	15
Cyprus	10	3	1	6	15	20	10
Kazakhstan	10	3	1	6	13	17	10
San Marino	10	0	0	10	1	51	0

Group J

Nov15 - Yerevan
Armenia 0
Greece 1 (Limnios 35)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 6,450. **Ref:** Raczkowski (Pol)
Armenia: Hayrapetyan - Hambardzumyan, Voskanyan (Avetisyan 83), Calisir, Ishkhanyan, K Hovhannisyan, Barseghyan, Grigoryan, Hovsepyan (Yedigaryan 78), Vardanyan (Sarkisov 59), Karapetyan.
Greece: Vlachodimos - Bakakis, Hatzidiakos, Stafylidis, Giannoulis, Kourbelis, Galanopoulos, Limnios, Bakasetas (Donis 81), Mantalos (Masouras 66), Pavlidis (Koulouris 74).

Nov15 - Zenica
Bosnia-Herzegovina 0
Italy 3 (Acerbi 21, Insigne 37, Belotti 52)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 8,355. **Ref:** Scharer (Swi)
Bosnia-Herzegovina: Sehic - Kvrzic, A Kovacevic, Bicakcic, Kolasinac, Besic (Saric 61), Pjanic (Jajalo 77), Cimirot, Visca (Hodzic 61), Dzeko, Krunic.
Italy: Donnarumma (Gollini 88) - Florenzi, Bonucci, Acerbi, Emerson, Barella, Jorginho, Tonali, Bernardeschi (El Shaarawy 75), Belotti, Insigne (Castrovilli 86).

Nov15 - Helsinki
Finland 3 (Tuominen 21, Pukki pen 64, 75)
Liechtenstein 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 9,804. **Ref:** Bastien (Fra)
Finland: Hradecky - Raitala, Toivio, Arajuuri, Pirinen, Lod, Sparv (Kauko 71), Kamara, Soiri (Skrabb 78), Pukki (Karjalainen 84), Tuominen.
Liechtenstein: B Buchel - Brandle, Malin, Rechsteiner, Goppel, M Buchel, Meier (Sele 90+1), Hasler, Polverino (Gubser 73), Salanovic, Y Frick (Kardesoglu 84).

Nov18 - Athens
Greece 2 (Mantalos 47, Galanopoulos 70)
Finland 1 (Pukki 27)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 5,453. **Ref:** Eskov (Rus)
Greece: Vlachodimos - Bakakis, Hatzidiakos, Stafylidis, Giannoulis, Limnios, Kourbelis, Galanopoulos (Bouchalakis 73), Mantalos (Masouras 90+3), Pavlidis (Koulouris 64), Bakasetas.
Finland: Joronen - Toivio (Lam 59), L Vaisanen, S Vaisanen, Raitala, Lod, Kamara, Schuller (Jensen 77), Skrabb (Soiri 77), Kauko, Pukki.

Nov18 - Palermo
Italy 9 (Immobile 8, 33, Zaniolo 9, 64, Barella 29, Romagnoli 72, Jorginho pen 75, Orsolini 78, Chiesa 81)
Armenia 1 (Babayan 79)
HT: 4-0. **Att:** 27,752. **Ref:** Martins (Por)
Italy: Sirigu (Meret 77) - Di Lorenzo, Bonucci (Izzo 69), Romagnoli, Biraghi, Tonali, Jorginho, Barella (Orsolini 46), Zaniolo, Immobile, Chiesa.
Armenia: Hayrapetyan - Hambardzumyan, Haroyan, Calisir, Ishkhanyan (Sarkisov 69), K Hovhannisyan, Barseghyan, Grigoryan (Simonyan 60), Yedigaryan (Avetisyan 82), Babayan, Karapetyan.

Nov18 - Vaduz
Liechtenstein 0
Bosnia-Herzegovina 3 (Civic 57, Hodzic 64, 72)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 2,993. **Ref:** Ozkahya (Tur)
Liechtenstein: B Buchel - Brandle, Malin, Rechsteiner, Goppel, S Wolfinger, Polverino (Frommelt 67), M Buchel, Hasler, Salanovic (Yildiz 46), Y Frick (Gubser 82).
Bosnia-Herzegovina: Piric - Memisevic, Mihojevic (Dzeko 70), Bicakcic, Civic, Hajradinovic (Besic 64), Jajalo, Saric, Hajrovic, Hodzic, Duljevic (Hotic 46).

EURO 2020 QUALIFIERS – GROUP J – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Italy (QF)	10	10	0	0	37	4	30
Finland (QF)	10	6	0	4	16	10	18
Greece	10	4	2	4	12	14	14
Bosnia-Herz	10	4	1	5	20	17	13
Armenia	10	3	1	6	14	25	10
Liechtenstein	10	0	2	8	2	31	2

● *The top 2 in each of the10 groups have qualified for the 24-team Euro 2020 (European Championship) finals; the 4 remaining finals places will be taken by the winners of the 4 UEFA Nations League play-off Finals*

UEFA NATIONS LEAGUE PLAY-OFFS

The teams with the best records in their UEFA Nations League sections that did not qualify for the Euro 2020 finals via the Euro 2020 qualifiers entered the UEFA Nations League play-offs

Semi-finals draw

Path A
Bulgaria v Hungary; Iceland v Romania

Path B
Bosnia-Herzegovina v Northern Ireland; Slovakia v Republic of Ireland

Path C
Norway v Serbia; Scotland v Israel

Path D
Georgia v Belarus; North Macedonia v Kosovo

Semi-finals to be played Mar 26, 2020

● *The winners of each path's semi-finals will meet in a Final (to be played Mar 31, 2020). The 4 Final winners will qualify for the Euro 2020 finals*

CONCACAF NATIONS LEAGUE

LEAGUE A

Group A

Nov15 - Orlando
United States 4 (Morris 2, Zardes 23, 89, Long 34)
Canada 1 (Vitoria 72)
HT: 3-0. **Att:** 13,103. **Ref:** Ramos (Mex)
United States: Guzan - Dest (Boyd 90+2), Long, Brooks, Ream, McKennie, Yueill, Arriola, Lletget (Morales 69), Morris (Yedlin 86), Zardes.
Canada: Borjan - Laryea, Vitoria, Henry (Cornelius 48), Davies, Arfield, Kaye (Eustaquio 62), Piette, Osorio, Cavallini (Hoilett 61), David.

Nov19 - George Town, Cayman Islands
Cuba 0
United States 4 (Sargent 1, 66, Morris 26, 39)
HT: 0-3. **Ref:** Pitti (Pan)
Cuba: Sanchez - Morejon, Ramos, Rizo, Almelo (Perez 60), Rodriguez, Hernandez, Espino, Abreu (Reve 83), Paradela, Reyes.
United States: Guzan - Yedlin (Cannon 60), Long, Ream, Lovitz, Roldan, Yueill, McKennie (Morales 69), Arriola, Sargent, Morris (Boyd 46).

CONC NATIONS LEAGUE – LGE A: GP A – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
USA (Q)	4	3	0	1	15	3	9
Canada	4	3	0	1	10	4	9
Cuba (R)	4	0	0	4	0	18	0

Group B

Nov15 - Panama City
Panama 0
Mexico 3 (Jimenez 8, pen 85, Alvarez 70)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 16,407. **Ref:** Montero (CR)
Panama: Calderon - Palacios, R Torres, Machado, Ariano, Quintero (Arroyo 68), Ayarza (Cooper 75), Escobar, Rodriguez (Waterman 59), Barcenas, G Torres.
Mexico: Ochoa - L Rodriguez, C Montes, Moreno, Gallardo, C Rodriguez, Alvarez, Gutierrez, Alvarado (Antuna 70), Jimenez (Macias 88), Pizarro (Pineda 79).

Nov19 - Toluca
Mexico 2 (Cordova 27, Antuna 90+3)
Bermuda 1 (Leverock 10)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Cornejo (ESv)
Mexico: H Gonzalez - Sanchez, Alvarez, Moreno, Calderon, Antuna, Romo, Aguirre (Pizarro 63), Pineda (Alvarado 63), Cordova, Macias (Jimenez 71).
Bermuda: Eve - Brangman, Leverock, Bather, Blankendal, Lewis (Butterfield 72), Bascome (Clemons 66), Lee, Donawa (Simmons 81), Lambe, Wells.

CONC NATIONS LEAGUE – LGE A: GP B – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Mexico (Q)	4	4	0	0	13	3	12
Panama	4	1	0	3	5	9	3
Bermuda (R)	4	1	0	3	5	11	3

Group C

Nov14 - Fort-de-France
Martinique 1 (Riviere 6)
Honduras 1 (Mejia 65)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 1,453. **Ref:** Unkel (USA)
Martinique: Chauvet - Vitulin, Delem, Cretinoir, Camille, Herelle, Mandouki, Marajo (Yann Thimon 25), Abaul, Fortune (Catherine 87), Riviere (Jougon 53).
Honduras: Fonseca - Tobias, Pereira, M Figueroa, Izaguirre, B Acosta, Rivas, Martinez (Vuelto 46), Rodriguez, Solano (Castellanos 73), Mejia (Benguche 76).

Nov17 - San Pedro Sula
Honduras 4 (Rubio 5, Moya 20, Elis pen 45+2, 54)
Trinidad & Tobago 0
HT: 3-0. **Ref:** Aguilar (ESv)
Honduras: L Lopez - Crisanto, Maldonado, M Figueroa, Alvarado, A Lopez, Pineda, Elis, Moya (Rodriguez 87), Rubio (Rivas 79), Castillo (Mejia 85).
Trinidad & Tobago: Phillip - Andrews, Bateau, David, Russell (Mitchell 56; Cyrus 70), Lester, Goddard, J Williams (Francois 75), Guerra, Telfer, Joseph.

CONC NATIONS LEAGUE – LGE A: GP C – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Honduras (Q)	4	3	1	0	8	1	10
Martinique	4	0	3	1	4	5	3
Trin & Tob (R)	4	0	2	2	3	9	2

Group D

Nov14 - Willemstad
Curacao 1 (Janga 20)
Costa Rica 2 (Johan Venegas pen 14, Calvo 84)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 11,387. **Ref:** Ortiz (Mex)
Curacao: Room - Gaari, Shermar Martina (Lachman 68), L Bacuna, Nepomuceno, Kuwas, J Bacuna, De Nooijer, Hooi, Bonevacia (Benschop 73), Janga.
Costa Rica: Alvarado - Gonzalez, Waston, Calvo, Borges, Blanco, Johan Venegas, Angulo (Fuller 70), Matarrita (Cubero 74), Ortiz, Moya (Leal 70). *Sent off: Blanco 64.*

Nov17 - SanJose
Costa Rica 1 (Calvo 27)
Haiti 1 (Nazon pen 38)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Martinez (Hnd)
Costa Rica: Alvarado - Fuller, Gonzalez, Waston, Calvo, Matarrita, Borges, Flores (Angulo 63), Leal (Moya 60), Johan Venegas (Cubero 71), Ortiz.
Haiti: Placide - Arcus, Ade, Geffrard, Christian (Desire 81), Alceus (Etienne 90), Mustivar (Saba 64), Lambese, Guerrier, Nazon, Pierrot.

CONC NATIONS LEAGUE – LGE A: GP D – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Costa Rica (Q)	4	1	3	0	4	3	6
Curacao	4	1	2	1	3	3	5
Haiti (R)	4	0	3	1	3	4	3

● *The 4 League A group winners have qualified for the Nations League semi-finals; the bottom team in each group has been relegated to League B for the next edition of the tournament*

● *In addition, the top 2 in each League A group have qualified for the 2021 CONCACAF Gold Cup finals; the 3rd-placed teams enter the qualifying play-offs for that tournament*

Semi-finals schedule

Honduras v United States
Mexico v Costa Rica
Single-leg ties, to be playedJune 2020; the winners will meet in the Final, also in a single-leg tie that month; the losing semi-finalists will meet in the 3rd-place match

LEAGUE B

Group A

Nov14 - Belmopan
Belize 2 (Lewis 4, McCaulay 70)
French Guiana 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Lezama (Nic)

Nov14 - Basseterre
St Kitts & Nevis 0
Grenada 0
Ref: Parchment (Jam)

Nov17 - Cayenne
French Guiana 3 (J Marigard 19, 28, Sarrucco 76)
St Kitts & Nevis 1 (Terrell 11)
HT: 2-1. **Ref:** Macias (Mex)

Nov17 - St George's
Grenada 3 (J Charles 14, 59, 68)
Belize 2 (Gaynair 32, Salazar 55)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Torres (PR)

CONC NATIONS LEAGUE – LGE B: GP A – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Grenada (P)	6	4	2	0	8	4	14
French Guiana	6	2	2	2	8	6	8
Belize	6	2	0	4	6	12	6
St Kitts & N (R)	6	1	2	3	8	8	5

Group B

Nov16 - San Salvador
El Salvador 1 (Portillo 90+1)
Montserrat 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Vergara (Pan)

Nov16 - Gros Islet
St Lucia 1 (A Joseph 38)
Dominican Republic 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Herrera (ESv)

Nov19 - San Salvador
El Salvador 2 (Portillo 16, Punyed 87)
Dominican Republic 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Pineda (CR)

Nov19 - Gros Islet
St Lucia 0
Montserrat 1 (Pond 35)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Nation (Jam)

CONC NATIONS LEAGUE – LGE B: GP B – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
El Salvador (P)	6	5	0	1	10	1	15
Montserrat	6	2	2	2	4	5	8
Dominican Rep	6	2	1	3	5	5	7
St Lucia (R)	6	1	1	4	2	10	4

Group C

Nov15 - North Sound
Antigua & Barbuda 0
Jamaica 2 (Foster 34, Morris 58)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Encarnacion (DoR)

Nov15 - Leonora
Guyana 4 (Briggs 7, Harriott 44, Bobb 53, 73)
Aruba 2 (G Croes 2, Breinburg pen 22)
HT: 2-2. **Ref:** Morrison (Jam)

Nov18 - Willemstad, Curacao
Aruba 2 (John 20, Harms 76)
Antigua & Barbuda 3 (Benjamin 36, Harms og 82, Bowry 84)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Perez (Mex)
Sent off: Paul (Aruba) 62

Nov18 - Montego Bay
Jamaica 1 (East 50)
Guyana 1 (Welshman 45)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Herrera (CR)

CONC NATIONS LEAGUE – LGE B: GP C – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Jamaica (P)	6	5	1	0	21	1	16
Guyana	6	3	1	2	12	10	10
Antigua & B	6	3	0	3	8	17	9
Aruba (R)	6	0	0	6	5	18	0

Group D

Nov15 - Arnos Vale
St Vincent & The Grenadines 1 (Sutherland 60)
Nicaragua 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Radix (Grn)

Nov15 - Paramaribo
Surinam 4 (Apai 15, 88, G Vlijter 60, 74)
Dominica 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Johnson (Guy)

Nov18 - Roseau
Dominica 1 (Laville 71)
St Vincent & The Grenadines 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** De Leca (Aru)

Nov18 - Managua
Nicaragua 1 (Fuentes 60)
Surinam 2 (Comvalius 21, Hasselbaink 53)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Senecharles (Hai)

CONC NATIONS LEAGUE – LGE B: GP D – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Surinam (P)	6	4	1	1	16	5	13
St Vincent & G	6	3	2	1	6	4	11
Nicaragua	6	2	1	3	9	11	7
Dominica (R)	6	1	0	5	3	14	3

● *The 4 League B group winners have won promotion to League A for the next edition of the tournament; the bottom team in each group has been relegated to League C*

● *In addition, the 4 League B group winners have qualified for the 2021 CONCACAF Gold Cup finals; the runners-up enter the qualifying play-offs for that tournament*

LEAGUE C

Group A

Nov16 - George Town
Cayman Islands 1 (Hyde 17)
US Virgin Islands 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Kellys (Pan)

Nov16 - The Valley, Anguilla
Saint-Martin 1 (Chevalier 81)
Barbados 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Lopez (Gtm)

Nov19 - Bridgetown
Barbados 3 (Hope 32, 90, Lashley 86)
Cayman Islands 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Ward (SKN)

Nov19 - Upper Bethlehem
US Virgin Islands 1 (McGuiness 69)
Saint-Martin 2 (Chevalier 39, Bellechasse 49)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Gaymes (SVG)
Sent off: RakeemJoseph 47, Greene 83 (both US Virgin Islands)

CONC NATIONS LEAGUE – LGE C: GP A – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Barbados (P)	6	4	0	2	14	4	12
Cayman Is	6	4	0	2	7	8	12
Saint-Martin	6	3	0	3	7	8	9
US Virgin Is	6	1	0	5	3	11	3

Group B

Nov14 - Nassau
Bahamas 3 (Joseph 9, St Fleur 11, Carey 36)
British Virgin Islands 0
HT: 3-0. **Ref:** Bassue (SKN)

Nov17 - Willemstad, Curacao
Bonaire 1 (Piar 44)
Bahamas 1 (Delancy 36)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Lopez (Gtm)

CONC NATIONS LEAGUE – LGE C: GP B – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bahamas (P)	4	3	1	0	10	2	10
Bonaire	4	2	1	1	10	8	7
British Virgin Is	4	0	0	4	5	15	0

Group C

Nov16 - Guatemala City
Guatemala 5 (Gallardo 3, Galindo pen 19, 45, Alvarez 56, L Martinez 82)
Puerto Rico 0
HT: 3-0. **Ref:** Salgado (Hnd)

Nov19 - Bayamon
Puerto Rico 3 (S Rivera 56, pen 68, Vega 82)
Anguilla 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Sanchez (Pan)
Sent off: Lee (Anguilla) 69

CONC NATIONS LEAGUE – LGE C: GP C – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Guatemala (P)	4	4	0	0	25	0	12
Puerto Rico	4	2	0	2	6	12	6
Anguilla	4	0	0	4	2	21	0

Group D

Nov14 - Providenciales
Turks & Caicos Islands 3 (Elcius 37, Singh 75, Forbes 90+3)
Sint Maarten 2 (Lake 12, Boelijn 45+1)
HT: 1-2. **Ref:** Anderson (PR)

Nov17 - Les Abymes
Guadeloupe 10 (Mirval 3, 6, 53, Valerius 7, Ramothe 30, 75, Durbant 39, 63, Tille 80, Anatol pen 90)
Turks & Caicos Islands 0
HT: 5-0. **Ref:** Saghafi (USA)

CONC NATIONS LEAGUE – LGE C: GP D – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Guadeloupe (P)	4	4	0	0	20	2	12
Turks & Caicos	4	2	0	2	8	17	6
Sint Maarten	4	0	0	4	6	15	0

● *The 4 League C group winners have won promotion to League B for the next edition of the tournament*

● *In addition, the 4 League C group winners enter the qualifying play-offs for the 2021 CONCACAF Gold Cup*

2021 AFRICA CUP OF NATIONS QUALS

Group A

Nov13 - Windhoek
Namibia 2 (Adoassou og 66, Katjiukua 77)
Chad 1 (N'Douassel 68)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Diraneh Guedi (Dji)

Nov14 - Bamako
Mali 2 (Adama Traore/F 56, Issiaga Sylla og 71)
Guinea 2 (N Keita 66, Conde 75)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** El Jaafari (Mor)

Nov17 - N'Djamena
Chad 0
Mali 2 (Djenepo 14, Camara 45+3)
HT: 0-2. **Ref:** Dahane (Mra)

Nov17 - Conakry
Guinea 2 (Issiaga Sylla 42, Kante 70)
Namibia 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Attiogbe (Tog)

AFRICA CUP OF NATIONS QUALIFIERS – GP A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Guinea	2	1	1	0	4	2	4
Mali	2	1	1	0	4	2	4
Namibia	2	1	0	1	2	3	3
Chad	2	0	0	2	1	4	0

Group B

Nov13 - Ouagadougou
Burkina Faso 0
Uganda 0
Ref: Boukhalfa (Alg)

Nov13 - Blantyre
Malawi 1 (Mhango 68)
South Sudan 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Ndabihawenimana (Brd)

Nov17 - Khartoum, Sudan
South Sudan 1 (Pawaar 76)
Burkina Faso 2 (Bance 15, 30)
HT: 0-2. **Ref:** Mogos Teklu (Eri)

Nov17 - Kira
Uganda 2 (Okwi 30, Bayo 68)
Malawi 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Ismail (Sud)

AFRICA CUP OF NATIONS QUALIFIERS – GP B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Uganda	2	1	1	0	2	0	4
Burkina Faso	2	1	1	0	2	1	4
Malawi	2	1	0	1	1	2	3
South Sudan	2	0	0	2	1	3	0

Group C

Nov13 - Omdurman
Sudan 4 (Agab 7, Mahmoud 44, Diogo og 62, Al Rasheed 77)
Sao Tome e Principe 0
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Ali Moussa (Ngr)
Sent off: Primo (Sao Tome e Principe) 21

Nov14 - Cape Coast
Ghana 2 (Partey 36, Kudus 80)
South Africa 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Ghorbal (Alg)

Nov17 -Johannesburg
South Africa 1 (Phiri 45)
Sudan 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Otogo-Castane (Gab)

Nov18 - Sao Tome
Sao Tome e Principe 0
Ghana 1 (J Ayew pen 50)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Nkounkou (Con)

AFRICA CUP OF NATIONS QUALIFIERS – GP C

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ghana	2	2	0	0	3	0	6
South Africa	2	1	0	1	1	2	3
Sudan	2	1	0	1	4	1	3
Sao Tome e P	2	0	0	2	0	5	0

Group D

Nov13 - Luanda
Angola 1 (Eduardo 3)
Gambia 3 (Ceesay 16, 17, Marreh 89)
HT: 1-2. **Ref:** Koto (Les)

Nov14 - Kinshasa
DR Congo 0
Gabon 0
Ref: Hagi (Som)

Nov17 - Franceville
Gabon 2 (Boupendza 27, Bouanga 45)
Angola 1 (Yano 84)
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Camille (Sey)

Nov18 - Bakau
Gambia 2 (Jagne 52, Jobe 90+2)
DR Congo 2 (Bakambu 45+3, Muleka 75)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Matemara (Zim)

AFRICA CUP OF NATIONS QUALIFIERS – GP D

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Gambia	2	1	1	0	5	3	4
Gabon	2	1	1	0	2	1	4
DR Congo	2	0	2	0	2	2	2
Angola	2	0	0	2	2	5	0

Group E

Nov13 - Bangui
Central African Republic 2 (Mabide 5, Mafouta 90+2)
Burundi 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Ogwayo (Ken)

Nov15 - Rabat
Morocco 0
Mauritania 0
Ref: Hakizimana (Rwa)

Nov19 - Bujumbura
Burundi 0
Morocco 3 (Mazraoui 27, En-Nesyri 39, Hakimi 82)
HT: 0-2. **Ref:** N'Diaye (Sen)

Nov19 - Nouakchott
Mauritania 2 (Hacen 27, Guidileye 90)
Central African Republic 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Selmi (Tun)

AFRICA CUP OF NATIONS QUALIFIERS – GP E	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Morocco	2	1	1	0	3	0	4
Mauritania	2	1	1	0	2	0	4
Cent Af Rep	2	1	0	1	2	2	3
Burundi	2	0	0	2	0	5	0

Group F
Nov13 - Yaounde
Cameroon 0
Cape Verde Islands 0
Ref: Gassama (Gam)

Nov14 - Maputo
Mozambique 2 (Mexer pen 28, Telinho 31)
Rwanda 0
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Ligali (Ben)

Nov17 - Kigali
Rwanda 0
Cameroon 1 (Ngamaleu 70)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Ibrahim (Lby)

Nov18 - Praia
Cape Verde Islands 2 (Garry Rodrigues 6, Ryan Mendes 57)
Mozambique 2 (Telinho 18, Witi 90+1)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Ogabor (Nga)

AFRICA CUP OF NATIONS QUALIFIERS – GP F	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Mozambique	2	1	1	0	4	2	4
Cameroon	2	1	1	0	1	0	4
Cape Verde Is	2	0	2	0	2	2	2
Rwanda	2	0	0	2	0	3	0

Group G
Nov14 - Borg El Arab
Egypt 1 (Kahraba 42)
Kenya 1 (Olunga 67)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Alioum (Cam)

Nov14 - Lome
Togo 0
Comoros 1 (Selemani 51)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Ngambo (DRC)

Nov18 - Moroni
Comoros 0
Egypt 0
Ref: Sinko (IvC)

Nov18 - Kasarani
Kenya 1 (Omolo 35)
Togo 1 (Ouro-Sama 64)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Mahamat (Chd)

AFRICA CUP OF NATIONS QUALIFIERS – GP G	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Comoros	2	1	1	0	1	0	4
Kenya	2	0	2	0	2	2	2
Egypt	2	0	2	0	1	1	2
Togo	2	0	1	1	1	2	1

Group H
Nov14 - Blida
Algeria 5 (Bensebaini 44, Bounedjah pen 68, 90, Belaili 75, Soudani 86)
Zambia 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Tessema (Eth)

Nov15 - Harare
Zimbabwe 0
Botswana 0
Ref: Nkurunziza (Brd)

Nov18 - Gaborone
Botswana 0
Algeria 1 (Belaili 15)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Sabilla (Uga)
Sent off: Gaogangwe (Botswana) 84

Nov19 - Lusaka
Zambia 1 (Daka 20)
Zimbabwe 2 (Billiat 11, 79)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Keita (Mli)

AFRICA CUP OF NATIONS QUALIFIERS – GP H	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Algeria	2	2	0	0	6	0	6
Zimbabwe	2	1	1	0	2	1	4
Botswana	2	0	1	1	0	1	1
Zambia	2	0	0	2	1	7	0

Group I
Nov13 - Bissau
Guinea-Bissau 3 (Jorginho 40, Piqueti 45, Joao Mario 73)
Eswatini 0
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Kanoso (Mad)

Nov13 - Thies
Senegal 2 (S Sarr 26, H Diallo 28)
Congo 0
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Grisha (Egy)

Nov17 - Brazzaville
Congo 3 (Ibara 19, Ganvoula 70, Makiesse 79)
Guinea-Bissau 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Duarte (CVI)

Nov17 - Manzini
Eswatini 1 (Mamba 70)
Senegal 4 (Diedhiou 59, 66, 68, B N'Diaye 77)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Shoovaleka (Nam)
Sent off: Mamba (Eswatini) 72

AFRICA CUP OF NATIONS QUALIFIERS – GP I	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Senegal	2	2	0	0	6	1	6
Congo	2	1	0	1	3	2	3
Guinea-Bissau	2	1	0	1	3	3	3
Eswatini	2	0	0	2	1	7	0

Group J
Nov15 - Dar es Salaam
Tanzania 2 (Msuva 69, Abubakar 90+2)
Equatorial Guinea 1 (Obiang 15)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Heeralall (Mrs)

Nov15 - Rades
Tunisia 4 (Khazri 33, 89, Khaoui 41, 52)
Libya 1 (Elhouni 45+1)
HT: 2-1. **Ref:** Zakaria Mohamed (Egy)

Nov19 - Malabo
Equatorial Guinea 0
Tunisia 1 (Khazri 74)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Mohamed (Com)

Nov19 - Monastir, Tunisia
Libya 2 (Al Warfali pen 68, Saltou 81)
Tanzania 1 (Samatta pen 18)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Chizinga (Mwi)
Sent off: Elhouni (Libya) 87

AFRICA CUP OF NATIONS QUALIFIERS – GP J	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Tunisia	2	2	0	0	5	1	6
Libya	2	1	0	1	3	5	3
Tanzania	2	1	0	1	3	3	3
Equat Guinea	2	0	0	2	1	3	0

Group K
Nov16 - Abidjan
Ivory Coast 1 (Kessie pen 68)
Niger 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Goma (Ang)

Nov16 - Antananarivo
Madagascar 1 (Raveloson 18)
Ethiopia 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Toure (Gui)

Nov19 - Bahir Dar
Ethiopia 2 (Dagnachew 16, Bekele 26)
Ivory Coast 1 (Aurier 4)
HT: 2-1. **Ref:** Alvacao (Moz)

Nov19 - Niamey
Niger 2 (Wonkoye 6, Moussa 77)
Madagascar 6 (Nomenjanahary 10, 27, Anicet pen 35, Andriamatsinoro 39, Voavy 54, Morel 65)
HT: 1-4. **Ref:** Sikazwe (Zam)

AFRICA CUP OF NATIONS QUALIFIERS – GP K	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Madagascar	2	2	0	0	7	2	6
Ethiopia	2	1	0	1	2	2	3
Ivory Coast	2	1	0	1	2	2	3
Niger	2	0	0	2	2	7	0

Group L
Nov13 - Uyo
Nigeria 2 (Osimhen pen 45+1, Kalu 62)
Benin 1 (Sessegnon 3)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Sy (Sen)

Nov13 - Freetown
Sierra Leone 1 (Quee 71)
Lesotho 1 (Thabantso 90)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Ouattara (BuF)
Sent off: Davies (Sierra Leone) 85

Nov17 - Porto-Novo
Benin 1 (Dossou 30)
Sierra Leone 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Ganamandji (CAR)

Nov17 - Maseru
Lesotho 2 (Masoabi 11, Awaziem og 89)
Nigeria 4 (Iwobi 26, Chukwueze 37, Osimhen 75, 85)
HT: 1-2. **Ref:** Bondo (Bot)

AFRICA CUP OF NATIONS QUALIFIERS – GP L	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Nigeria	2	2	0	0	6	3	6
Benin	2	1	0	1	2	2	3
Lesotho	2	0	1	1	3	5	1
Sierra Leone	2	0	1	1	1	2	1

Remaining matchdays: *Aug 31-Sep 8 (x2), Oct 5-13, Nov 9-17 (all 2020) - each team will play a total of 6 games*

● *The top 2 in each of the12 groups will qualify for the 24-team finals. Hosts Cameroon are competing in the qualifying group stage despite having an automatic place in the finals*

GULF CUP

Played in Doha, Qatar

Group A
Nov 26
Qatar 1 (Hatem 49)
Iraq 2 (Qasim 19, 27)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 37,890. **Ref:** Tschudi (Swi)

Nov 26
United Arab Emirates 3 (Mabkhout 19, 39, 53)
Yemen 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 1,437. **Ref:** Al Kaf (Oma)

Nov 29
United Arab Emirates 0
Iraq 2 (Abbas 9, Abdul-Zahra 37)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 17,437. **Ref:** Boucaut (Blg)

Nov 29
Yemen 0
Qatar 6 (A Hassan 29, 36, pen 69, Almoez Ali 57, Al Ahrak 85, Akram Afif 90)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 26,392. **Ref:** Shaban (Kuw)

Dec 2
Qatar 4 (Akram Afif 20, pen 28, Al Haidos 53, Khoukhi 90+5)
United Arab Emirates 2 (Mabkhout pen 33, 77)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 43,780. **Ref:** Sato (Jap)

Dec 2
Yemen 0
Iraq 0
Ref: Al Ali (Kuw)
Sent off: Mustafa Mohammed (Iraq) 8

GULF CUP – GROUP A	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Iraq (Q)	3	2	1	0	4	1	7
Qatar (Q)	3	2	0	1	11	4	6
UAE	3	1	0	2	5	6	3
Yemen	3	0	1	2	0	9	1

Group B
Nov 27
Oman 0
Bahrain 0
Att: 3,400. **Ref:** Boucaut (Blg)

Nov 27
Saudi Arabia 1 (Al Buraikan 90+6)
Kuwait 3 (Al Dhefiri 43, Al Sanea 45+1, Al Faneni 90)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 5,777. **Ref:** Mohammed (UAE)

Nov 30
Kuwait 1 (Nasser 79)
Oman 2 (Al Muqbali pen 16, pen 32)
HT: 0-2. **Ref:** Al Marri (Qat)

Nov 30
Bahrain 0
Saudi Arabia 2 (Al Hamdan 29, Al Khabrani 58)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Tschudi (Swi)

Dec 2
Kuwait 2 (Nasser pen 59, Zanki 85)
Bahrain 4 (Madan 45+1, Al Shaikh 69, Thiago Augusto 83, 90+3)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Al Jeneibi (UAE)

Dec 2
Oman 1 (R Al Alawi 55)
Saudi Arabia 3 (Al Buraikan 26, Bahebri 42, 57)
HT: 0-2. **Ref:** Boucaut (Blg)

GULF CUP – GROUP B	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
S Arabia (Q)	3	2	0	1	6	4	6
Bahrain (Q)	3	1	1	1	4	4	4
Oman	3	1	1	1	3	4	4
Kuwait	3	1	0	2	6	7	3

● *The top 2 in both groups qualified for the semi-finals*

Semi-finals
Dec 5
Iraq 2 (M Ali 6, Bayesh 18)
Bahrain 2 (Al Haza'a 14, Marhoon 45+2)
Aet. **HT:** 2-2. **90mins:** 2-2. **Ref:** Sato (Jap)
Bahrain 5-3 on pens

Dec 5
Saudi Arabia 1 (Al Hamdan 28)
Qatar 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 42,025. **Ref:** Al Ali (Kuw)

Final
Dec 8
Bahrain 1 (Al Romaihi 69)
Saudi Arabia 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Tschudi (Swi)

FRIENDLIES

Thursday, November 14
Nov14 - Sofia
Bulgaria 0
Paraguay 1 (Almiron 60)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Verissimo (Por)
Bulgaria: Georgiev - S Popov (V Popov 85), Chorbadzhiyski, Terziev (K Dimitrov 64), Goranov, Nedelev (Kraev 46), Kostadinov (Tsvetkov 80), Malinov, Wanderson (G Ivanov 70), I Popov, Marcelinho (Despodov 46).
Paraguay: Silva - Moreira, Balbuena, Gomez, Riveros, Martinez (Sanchez 58), Morel (B Valdez 81), Villasanti (Arzamendia 90+4), Almiron (M Rojas 89), Angel Romero (Melgarejo 73), Lezcano (Samudio 90+5).

Nov14 - Phnom Penh
Cambodia 1 (Keo Sokpheng pen 34)
Mongolia 1 (Narmandakh 21)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 22,000

Nov14 - Portoviejo
Ecuador 3 (Franco 29, E Valencia pen 71, 85)
Trinidad & Tobago 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Ortega (Per)
Ecuador: Padilla - Carabali, Torres, Arreaga (Corozo 74), Palacios, Franco (Sierra 58), Mendez, Mena (Cabeza 76), Renato Ibarra (Rojas 67), Estrada (E Valencia 58), Romario Ibarra (Caicedo 43).
Trinidad & Tobago: Frenderup - A Jones, Mitchell, Cyrus (Bateau 46), M Williams, Lester, Hyland (Guerra 24), N Lewis (Telfer 63), Fortune (Woo Ling 80), Russell, Carr (Francois 61).

Nov14 - Doha
Qatar 2 (Muntari 32, Shahdan og 43)
Singapore 0
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Ashkanani (Kuw)

Nov14 - Dublin
Republic of Ireland 3 (Williams 45, Maguire 52, Robinson 75)
New Zealand 1 (McCowatt 30)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 18,728. **Ref:** Jenkins (Wal)
Republic of Ireland: O'Hara (Travers 66) - O'Connor, K Long, Clark, Williams (O'Dowda 56), Browne (Hourihane 66), Cullen, Brady, Byrne (Judge 63), Maguire (Collins 73), Parrott (Robinson 63).
New Zealand: Marinovic - Roux (Payne 90+2), Reid (Tuiloma 46), Boxall (Smith 74), Cacace, Singh, Bell, Thomas (McGlinchey 74), McCowatt (Collier 85), Wood (De Jong 76), Just.

Nov14 - Zaporizhya
Ukraine 1 (Bezus 90+2)
Estonia 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 11,756. **Ref:** Martinez Munuera (Spa)
Ukraine: Lunin - Bolbat, Matviyenko (Shabanov 46), Plastun, Sobol, Sydorchuk (Ivanisenya 46), Yarmolenko (Shved 66), Kovalenko (Buyalskyi 46), Shakhov (Shepelev 75), Tsygankov (Bezus 46), Besedin.
Estonia: Igonen - Kams (Teniste 46), Baranov, Kuusk, Pikk, Ainsalu (Antonov 63), Kreida, Kait (Vassiljev 71), Puri (Kallaste 83), Anier (Sorga 71), Liivak (Zenjov 63).

Friday, November 15
Nov15 - Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
Brazil 0
Argentina 1 (Messi 13)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 22,541. **Ref:** Conger (NZ)
Brazil: Alisson - Danilo, Eder Militao, Thiago Silva, Alex Sandro (Renan Lodi 64), Arthur (Fabinho 55), Casemiro (Wesley 86), Lucas Paqueta (Philippe Coutinho 46), Gabriel Jesus (Richarlison 71), Roberto Firmino, Willian (Rodrygo 71).
Argentina: Andrada - Foyth, Pezzella, Otamendi, Tagliafico, Ocampos (Gonzalez 75), De Paul (Dominguez 90), Paredes (Rodriguez 83), Lo Celso (Acuna 59), Messi, Lautaro Martinez (Alario 88).

Nov15 - Miami, USA
Colombia 1 (Morelos 90+3)
Peru 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Marrufo (USA)
Colombia: Ospina - Arias, Mina, D Sanchez, Tesillo, Cuadrado (Alzate 74), Lerma, Moreno (Uribe 46), Muriel (Martinez 59), Morelos, Diaz (Mendoza 61).
Peru: Gallese - Corzo (Ascues 90+2), Santamaria, Abram, Trauco, Advincula (Polo 65), Tapia (Zambrano 46), Aquino (Benavente 46), Flores, Guerrero, Ruidiaz (Costa 88).

Nov15 - Budapest
Hungary 1 (Adam Szalai 24)
Uruguay 2 (Cavani 15, B Rodriguez 21)
HT: 1-2. **Att:** 65,114. **Ref:** Skomina (Sln)
Hungary: Dibusz - Bese, Barath (Attila Szalai 72), Lang, Korhut (Z Nagy 75), Kalmar (Holman 83), Vida, Dzsudzsak (Kovacs 54), Szoboszlai (A Nagy 68), Varga, Adam Szalai (Feczesin 60).
Uruguay: Muslera - Gonzalez, Coates, Godin, Vina (Laxalt 68), B Rodriguez (Pereiro 82), Valverde (Torreira 68), Bentancur (Vecino 53), Lozano, L Suarez (Gomez 46), Cavani (Stuani 74).

Sunday, November 17
Nov17 - Vilnius
Lithuania 1 (Novikovas 45)
New Zealand 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 1,832. **Ref:** Farrugia Cann (Mlt)
Lithuania: Setkus - Palionis (Klimavicius 46), Vaitkunas, Girdvainis, Baravykas, Mikoliunas (Kazlauskas 83), Novikovas, Cernych (D Matulevicius 86), Simkus (G Matulevicius 75), Lasickas, Golubickas (Satkus 90+1).
New Zealand: Woud - Smith, McGarry (Pijnaker 63), McGlinchey (Just 75), Rojas, Payne, Tuiloma, Collier (Mata 63), Rufer (Bell 46), Ridenton (Singh 46), De Jong.

Monday, November 18
Nov18 - Tel Aviv, Israel
Argentina 2 (Aguero 63, Messi pen 90+2)
Uruguay 2 (Cavani 34, L Suarez 68)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Reinshreiber (Isr)
Argentina: Andrada - Saravia, Pezzella, Otamendi, Tagliafico, De Paul (Rodriguez 88), Paredes (Gonzalez 79), Acuna (Dominguez 68), Messi, Dybala (Lautaro Martinez 76), Aguero.
Uruguay: Campana - Caceres, Coates (Gonzalez 17), Godin, Vina, Vecino, Torreira, Valverde (Bentancur 75), Lozano (B Rodriguez 88), L Suarez, Cavani (Laxalt 56).

Tuesday, November 19
Nov19 - Abu Dhabi, UAE
Brazil 3 (Lucas Paqueta 9, Philippe Coutinho 36, Danilo 60)
South Korea 0
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Al Jeneibi (UAE)
Brazil: Alisson - Danilo, Marquinhos, Eder Militao, Renan Lodi (Emerson 88), Fabinho, Arthur (Douglas Luiz 80), Lucas Paqueta (Roberto Firmino 84), Gabriel Jesus (Rodrygo 88), Richarlison, Philippe Coutinho.
South Korea: Cho Hyun-woo - Kim Moon-hwan, Kim Min-jae, Kim Young-gwon, Kim Jin-su, Ju Se-jong (Hwang In-beom 88), Jung Woo-young, Son Heung-min, Lee Jae-sung (Kwon Chang-hoon 75), Hwang Hee-chan (Na Sang-ho 65), Hwang Ui-jo.

Nov19 - Pula
Croatia 2 (Kashia og 25, Perisic 53)
Georgia 1 (Papunashvili 19)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 5,072. **Ref:** Sant (Mlt)
Croatia: Kalinic (Sluga 46) - Bartolec (Juranovic 46), Jedvaj (Caleta-Car 46), Skoric, Melnjak, Pasalic (Peric 75), Badelj, Kovacic (Vlasic 65), Rebic, Orsic (Rog 46), Perisic.
Georgia: Makaridze - Kakabadze (Shengelia 39), Kashia, Navalovski, Khocholava (Grigalava 80), Gvilia (Kvilitaia 83), Papunashvili (Kiteishvili 65), Qazaishvili (Kharaishvili 87), Aburjania, Jighauri, Lobjanidze (Arabuli 51).

Nov19 - Harrison, USA
Ecuador 0
Colombia 1 (Uribe 42)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Calderon (CR)
Ecuador: Padilla - Carabali (Lopez 46), Torres, Arreaga, Palacios, Franco (Rojas 84), Mendez (Estrada 67), Renato Ibarra (Plata 46), Mena, Romario Ibarra (Caicedo 70), E Valencia.
Colombia: Ospina - Medina, D Sanchez (J Murillo 46), Lucumi, Fabra (Tesillo 89), Uribe (Lerma 73), Barrios, Alzate, Diaz (Cuadrado 65), Morelos (Martinez 46), Mendoza (Moreno 80).

Nov19 - Osaka
Japan 1 (Yamaguchi 69)
Venezuela 4 (Rondon 8, 30, 33, Soteldo 38)
HT: 0-4. **Att:** 33,399. **Ref:** Yaacob (Mly)
Japan: Kawashima - Muroya, N Ueda (Miura 46), Hatanaka, Sasaki, Haraguchi (Ideguchi 82), Shibasaki, Hashimoto (Yamaguchi 65), Nakajima, Suzuki (Furuhashi 46), Asano (Nagai 65).
Venezuela: Farinez - Hernandez, Osorio, Villanueva, Rosales, Herrera (J Anor 90+2), Manzano (Zambrano 82), Rincon, Machis (Otero 61), Rondon (Aristeguieta 89), Soteldo (Murillo 77).

Nov19 - Podgorica
Montenegro 2 (Mugosa 9, Haksabanovic 17)
Belarus 0
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Farrugia Cann (Mlt)
Montenegro: Sarkic - Simic (Kopitovic 63), Raspopovic, Vujacic, Kojasevic (Lagator 73), Vesovic, Vukcevic (Hocko 62; Jovovic 77), M Jankovic, Boljevic, Haksabanovic (Bulatovic 77), Mugosa (Beciraj 72).
Belarus: Chernik - Polyakov (Zolotov 46), Veretilo, Martynovich (Pavlovets 46), Stasevich (Bessmertny 46), Dragun (Maevski 46), Kislyak, Sachivko, Yablonski, Skavysh (Laptev 75), Lisakovich (Nekhaychik 59).

Nov19 - Riyadh
Saudi Arabia 0
Paraguay 0
Att: 5,175. **Ref:** Al Samahiji (Bhn)
Saudi Arabia: Al Qarni - Al Ghanam, Al Khabrani, Al Tambakti, Al Obaid (Abdulhamid 21), Al Malki, Al Buraikan (Al Swat 69), Al Shehri (Al Ammar 46), Al Dawsari (Lajami 86), Al Bishi (Ali 75), Al Hamdan (Camara 46).
Paraguay: Fernandez - Moreira (I Piris 56), B Valdez, Gomez, Arzamendia (Riveros 78), Martinez (Villasanti 56), Cubas, M Rojas (O Romero 67), Almiron, Lezcano (Angel Romero 86), D Gonzalez (Samudio 89).

Thursday, November 21
Nov 21 - Coatepeque
Guatemala 8 (Alvarez 25, Guerra 30, 43, Galindo 45, 47, Rosales 56, Vargas 79, Barrientos 88)
Antigua & Barbuda 0
HT: 4-0. **Ref:** Reyna (Gtm)

Club football

ASIA

AFC CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Final

1st leg
Nov 9
Al Hilal (Sau) 1 (Carrillo 60)
Urawa Red Diamonds (Jap) 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 22,549. **Ref:** Sabah (Irq)
Al Hilal: Al Maiouf - Al Burayk, Jang, Al Bulaihi, Al Shahrani, Carrillo, Al Faraj, Otayf (Kanno 89), Al Dawsari, Giovinco (Al Abed 87), Gomis.
Urawa Red Diamonds: Fukushima - Iwanami, Suzuki, Makino, Hashioka, Ewerton, Aoki, Sekine (Ugajin 85), Nagasawa (Sugimoto 75), Fabricio, Koroki.

2nd leg
Nov 24
Urawa Red Diamonds 0
Al Hilal 2 (Al Dawsari 74, Gomis 90+3)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 58,109. **Ref:** Kovalenko (Uzb)
Al Hilal 3-0 on agg
Urawa Red Diamonds: Nishikawa - Iwanami, Suzuki, Makino, Hashioka, Ewerton, Aoki (Abe 88), Sekine, Nagasawa (Kashiwagi 63), Fabricio (Sugimoto 71), Koroki.
Al Hilal: Al Maiouf - Al Burayk (Al Hafith 80), Jang, Al Bulaihi, Al Shahrani, Carrillo, Al Faraj, Otayf (Al Shalhoub 90+4), Al Dawsari, Giovinco (Kanno 88), Gomis.

BHUTAN

2019 – NATIONAL LEAGUE – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Paro FC (C)	18	17	0	1	98	14	51
Transport Utd	18	13	2	3	59	27	41
Thimphu City	18	11	1	6	73	19	34
Ugyen Acad	18	10	3	5	63	30	33
BFF Academy	18	9	3	6	56	26	30
Druk United	18	9	3	6	30	26	30
High Quality U	18	6	1	11	50	40	19
Druk Stars	18	5	2	11	37	45	17
Paro United	18	2	1	15	28	137	7
Phuentsholing	18	0	0	18	21	151	0

CAMBODIA

2019 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Svay Rieng (C)	26	20	5	1	88	20	65
Visakha	26	18	4	4	86	30	58
Nagaworld	26	17	4	5	80	22	55
Boeung Ket	26	15	7	4	69	36	52
Angkor Tiger	26	14	7	5	68	32	49
PP Crown	26	15	3	8	94	47	48
Nat'l Defense	26	12	2	12	63	50	38
Soltilo Angkor	26	10	5	11	38	40	35
Kirivong SSC	26	11	1	14	49	39	34
Asia Euro Utd	26	10	4	12	47	57	34
Nat'l Police	26	8	4	14	58	59	28
Electricite	26	5	1	20	24	75	16
Kampong C	26	2	0	24	10	180	6
Bati Acad (R)	26	1	1	24	25	112	4

CHINA

2019 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Gua'zhou E (C)	30	23	3	4	68	24	72
Beijing Guoan	30	23	1	6	60	26	70
Shanghai SIPG	30	20	6	4	62	26	66
Jiangsu	30	15	8	7	60	41	53
Shandong	30	15	6	9	55	35	51
Wuhan	30	12	8	10	41	41	44
Tianjin Teda	30	12	5	13	43	45	41
Henan	30	11	8	11	41	46	41
Dalian	30	10	8	12	44	51	38
Chongqing	30	9	9	12	36	47	36
Hebei	30	9	6	15	37	55	33
Gua'zhou R&F	30	9	5	16	54	72	32
S'hai Shenhua	30	8	6	16	43	57	30
Tianjin Tianhai	30	4	13	13	40	53	25
Shenzhen (R)	30	4	9	17	31	57	21
Beijing R'he (R)	30	3	5	22	26	65	14

JAPAN

2019 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Yok'ama FM (C)	34	22	4	8	68	38	70
Tokyo	34	19	7	8	46	29	64
Kashima	34	18	9	7	54	30	63
Kawasaki	34	16	12	6	57	34	60
Cerezo	34	18	5	11	39	25	59
Sanfrecce	34	15	10	9	45	29	55
Gamba	34	12	11	11	54	48	47
Vissel	34	14	5	15	61	59	47
Oita	34	12	11	11	35	35	47
Consadole	34	13	7	14	54	49	46
Vegalta	34	12	5	17	38	45	41
Shimizu	34	11	6	17	45	69	39
Nagoya	34	9	10	15	45	50	37
Urawa	34	9	10	15	34	50	37
Sagan	34	10	6	18	32	53	36
Shonan[1]	34	10	6	18	40	63	36
Matsumoto (R)	34	6	13	15	21	40	31
Jubilo (R)	34	8	7	19	29	51	31

[1]*Enter rel/prom play-offs*

KYRGYZSTAN

2019 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dordoi (C)	28	21	3	4	76	21	66
Alay	28	20	2	6	66	35	62
Alga	28	14	5	9	47	35	47
Neftchi	28	14	4	10	43	31	46
Abdish-Ata	28	11	2	15	41	59	35
Ilbirs	28	10	5	13	49	46	35
Kara-Balta	28	5	4	19	24	66	19
Akademiya	28	2	5	21	22	75	11

MONGOLIA

Division split after18-round regular season; teams carried forward full regular-season record

2019 – CHAMPIONSHIP GROUP – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ulaanb'r C (C)	22	15	3	4	60	24	48
Erchim	22	15	3	4	65	28	48
Khangarid	22	13	1	8	62	45	40
Athletic 220	22	10	6	6	52	38	36
Deren	22	10	5	7	41	28	35

2019 – RELEGATION GROUP – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
SP Falcons	22	12	2	8	65	31	38
FC Ulaanb'tar	22	8	5	9	47	37	29
Anduud City	22	9	1	12	38	63	28
Khaan K'ns (R)	22	2	2	18	23	67	8
Khor'khon (R)	22	2	0	20	18	110	6

SOUTH KOREA

Division split after 33-round regular season; teams carried forward full regular-season record

2019 – CHAMPIONSHIP GROUP – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Jeonbuk (C)	38	22	13	3	72	32	79
Ulsan	38	23	10	5	71	39	79
Seoul	38	15	11	12	53	49	56
Pohang	38	16	8	14	49	49	56
Daegu	38	13	16	9	46	37	55
Gangwon	38	14	8	16	56	58	50

2019 – RELEGATION GROUP – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sangju	38	16	7	15	49	53	55
Suwon B'wings	38	12	12	14	46	49	48
Seongnam	38	12	9	17	30	40	45
Incheon	38	7	13	18	33	54	34
Gyeo'nam (R)[1]	38	6	15	17	43	61	33
Jeju (R)	38	5	12	21	45	72	27

[1]*Relegated after losing rel/prom play-off*

TAIWAN

2019 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Tatung (C)	21	16	4	1	75	18	52
Taipower	21	15	4	2	47	19	49
Hang Yuen	21	11	8	2	65	31	41
Taiwan Steel	21	10	3	8	43	44	33
Taichung F	21	8	4	9	37	26	28
NTUS	21	4	3	14	23	59	15
Ming Ch'n Univ	21	3	2	16	20	75	11
T'pei Red Lions	21	1	4	16	20	58	7

TAJIKISTAN

2019 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Istiklol (C)	21	16	3	2	60	20	51
Khujand	21	11	3	7	37	21	36
Regar-TadAZ	21	8	6	7	31	30	30
CSKA Pomir	21	8	5	8	24	27	29
Istaravshan	21	8	3	10	24	32	27
Kuktosh	21	7	6	8	31	36	27
Khatlon	21	6	6	9	26	28	24
Panjshir (R)	21	3	2	16	18	57	11

UZBEKISTAN

2019 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Pakhtakor (C)	26	22	3	1	75	18	69
Lokomotiv	26	13	10	3	40	17	49
Bunyodkor	26	12	7	7	37	33	43
Sogdiana	26	11	7	8	29	29	40
Metallurg	26	9	8	9	33	26	35
Surkhon	26	10	5	11	26	33	35
Nasaf	26	9	6	11	34	27	33
Navbahor	26	7	11	8	26	23	32
AGMK	26	9	5	12	36	37	32
Andijan	26	6	10	10	23	37	28
Kokand 1912	26	6	8	12	31	45	26
Bukhoro	26	5	9	12	18	37	24
Dinamo (R)	26	6	6	14	25	47	24
Qizilqum (R)	26	5	9	12	24	48	24

EUROPE

BELARUS

2019 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dinamo Br't (C)	30	23	6	1	70	22	75
BATE	30	22	4	4	61	21	70
Shakhtyor	30	20	5	5	59	21	65
Dinamo Minsk	30	15	5	10	43	39	50
Isloch	30	13	8	9	42	36	47
Torpedo Z	30	13	6	11	41	36	45
Gorodeya	30	12	8	10	31	29	44
Slavia	30	10	7	13	35	40	37
Neman	30	10	6	14	28	37	36
FK Minsk	30	9	9	12	36	44	36
Slutsk	30	9	7	14	29	46	34
Energetik	30	8	9	13	52	66	33
Vitebsk	30	8	7	15	24	39	31
Dnyapro (R)[1]	30	8	6	16	32	42	30
Gomel (R)	30	7	8	15	44	50	29
Torpedo M[2] (R)	30	1	3	26	4	63	6

[1]Relegated after losing rel/prom play-off
[2]Withdrew from league mid-season for financial reasons; remaining games awarded as 3-0 wins to their scheduled opponents

GEORGIA

2019 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dinamo Tb'i (C)	36	23	6	7	70	31	75
Dinamo Ba'mi	36	21	7	8	57	31	70
Saburtalo	36	21	7	8	67	36	70
Lokomotive	36	17	4	15	44	46	55
Chikhura	36	12	11	13	48	44	47
Torpedo	36	12	8	16	53	54	44
Dila	36	11	10	15	40	44	43
Rustavi[1]	36	9	11	16	40	56	38
Sioni[1]	36	10	8	18	38	80	38
WIT G'gia (R)	36	4	8	24	15	50	20

[1]Enter rel/prom play-offs

LITHUANIA

At the end of the 28-round, 8-team regular season the top 6 qualified for the championship group stage; bottom team Stumbras were relegated automatically; 7th-placed Palanga were relegated after losing the rel/prom play-off

2019 – CHAMPIONSHIP GROUP – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Suduva (C)	33	29	0	4	95	24	87
Zalgiris	33	24	2	7	79	29	74
Riteriai	33	16	7	10	57	36	55
Kauno	33	16	5	12	54	45	53
Panevezys	33	10	7	16	49	63	37
Atlantas	33	7	5	21	30	78	26

NORWAY

2019 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Molde (C)	30	21	5	4	72	31	68
Bodo/Glimt	30	15	9	6	64	44	54
Rosenborg	30	14	10	6	53	41	52
Odd	30	15	7	8	45	40	52
Viking	30	13	8	9	55	42	47
Kristiansund	30	11	8	11	41	41	41
Haugesund	30	9	13	8	44	37	40
Stabaek	30	10	10	10	38	36	40
Brann	30	10	10	10	32	37	40
Valerenga	30	8	10	12	39	44	34
Stromsgodset	30	8	8	14	41	54	32
Sarpsborg	30	5	15	10	30	40	30
Mjondalen	30	6	12	12	38	52	30
Lillestrom[1]	30	7	9	14	32	47	30
Tromso (R)	30	8	6	16	39	58	30
Ranheim (R)	30	7	6	17	36	55	27

[1]Enter rel/prom play-off

SOUTH AMERICA

LIBERTADORES CUP

Final

Nov 23 - Lima, Peru
Flamengo (Bra) 2 (Gabriel Barbosa 89, 90+2)
River Plate (Arg) 1 (Borre 14)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Tobar (Chl)
Flamengo: Diego Alves - Rafinha, Rodrigo Caio, Mari, Filipe Luis, Willian Arao (Vitinho 86), Gerson (Diego 66), De Arrascaeta (Piris Da Motta 90+3), Everton Ribeiro, Bruno Henrique, Gabriel Barbosa. *Sent off: Gabriel Barbosa 90+5.*
River Plate: Armani - Montiel, Martinez Quarta, Pinola, Casco (Diaz 77), Perez, Fernandez (Alvarez 69), Palacios, De La Cruz, Borre (Pratto 75), Suarez. *Sent off: Palacios 90+5.*

BRAZIL

2019 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Flamengo (C)	38	28	6	4	86	37	90
Santos	38	22	8	8	60	33	74
Palmeiras	38	21	11	6	61	32	74
Gremio	38	19	8	11	64	39	65
Atl Paranaense	38	18	10	10	51	32	64
Sao Paulo	38	17	12	9	39	30	63
Internacional	38	16	9	13	44	39	57
Corinthians	38	14	14	10	42	34	56
Fortaleza	38	15	8	15	50	49	53
Goias	38	15	7	16	46	64	52
Bahia	38	12	13	13	44	43	49
Vasco da Gama	38	12	13	13	39	45	49
Atl Mineiro	38	13	9	16	45	49	48
Fluminense	38	12	10	16	38	46	46
Botafogo	38	13	4	21	31	45	43
Ceara	38	10	9	19	36	41	39
Cruzeiro (R)	38	7	15	16	27	46	36
CSA (R)	38	8	8	22	24	58	32
Chapeco'se (R)	38	7	11	20	31	52	32
Avai (R)	38	3	11	24	18	62	20

PERU

2019 – CLAUSURA – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ali'za Lima (Q)	17	10	5	2	32	23	35
Universitario	17	9	6	2	16	10	33
Sp Cristal	17	9	4	4	31	20	31
D Binacional	17	7	7	3	30	13	28
C Mannucci	17	7	7	3	20	19	28
Sport Boys	17	7	6	4	23	21	27
U San Martin	17	6	8	3	21	15	26
Sp Huancayo	17	7	5	5	24	21	26
Melgar	17	7	3	7	29	22	24
Ayacucho	17	6	4	7	17	21	22
Real Garcilaso	17	6	3	8	19	16	21
U Comercio (R)[3]	17	5	4	8	21	27	19
Alianza Univ	17	5	4	8	17	26	19
U Cesar Vallejo	17	4	6	7	15	19	18
Ac Cantolao	17	4	4	9	23	30	16
UT Cajamarca	17	2	8	7	12	22	14
Pirata[1] (R)[3]	17	3	4	10	12	30	9
Dep Municipal[2]	17	3	4	10	20	27	8

As winners, Alianza Lima qualified for the 2019 overall championship play-offs
[1]4pts deducted for non-payment of debts
[2]5pts deducted for non-payment of debts
[3]Relegation determined by total points gained in apertura & clausura

CONCACAF

CONCACAF LEAGUE

Final

1st leg

Nov 7
Saprissa (CR) 1 (Venegas 19)
Motagua (Hnd) 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Parchment (Jam)
Saprissa: Cruz - Salinas, Robinson, David, Blanco, Barrantes, Angulo (Hadden 77), Bolanos (Zuniga 85), Leal, Venegas, Ugalde (Ramirez 71). *Sent off: Salinas 75.*
Motagua: Rougier - Pereira, Maldonado, Montes, Elvir, Lopez (Martinez 46), Castellanos, Izaguirre, Moreira, Galvaliz (F Crisanto 71), Estigarribia (Vega 80).

2nd leg

Nov 26
Motagua 0
Saprissa 0
Ref: Ramos (Mex)
Saprissa1-0 on agg
Motagua: Rougier - Pereira (F Crisanto 46), Maldonado, Montes, Elvir, Lopez, Castellanos, Galvaliz, Izaguirre (Martinez 63), Moreira, Estigarribia (Vega 46).
Saprissa: Cruz - Miller, Robinson, David, Blanco, Barrantes (Torres 84), Angulo (Aguero 78), Bolanos, Leal, Venegas, Ugalde (Ramirez 63).

● *Both finalists, the 2 losing semi-finalists - Alianza (ESv) and Olimpia (Hnd) - and the 2 highest-ranked losing teams in the quarter-finals - San Carlos (CR) and Comunicaciones (Gtm) - have qualified for the 2020 CONCACAF Champions League*

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

2019 Championship Final

(apertura winners Atletico Pantoja v clausura winners Cibao)
1st leg - Nov 9; 2nd leg - Nov 24
Atletico Pantoja v Cibao 1-2, 1-0
(agg 2-2, Atletico Pantoja 4-2 on pens)

AFRICA

REUNION

2019 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts[1]
St-Pierroise (C)	26	18	6	2	48	17	86
Ste-Marienne	26	17	5	4	46	24	82
Saint-Denis	26	14	7	5	43	24	75
Excelsior	26	15	3	8	42	27	74
Tamponnaise	26	10	12	4	42	26	68
Jeanne d'Arc	26	11	7	8	43	30	66
Trois Bassins	26	10	6	10	35	42	62
Capricorne	26	8	9	9	26	31	59
St-Pauloise	26	7	5	14	22	41	52
SDEFA	26	7	4	15	23	46	51
Saint-Louis	26	6	7	13	26	42	51
Marsouins[2]	26	5	6	15	25	38	46
St-Louisi'ne (R)	26	5	4	17	31	51	45
Ste-Suzanne (R)	26	2	13	11	21	34	45

[1]4pts for a win, 2pts for a draw,1pt for a loss
[2]1pt deducted

OCEANIA

NEW CALEDONIA

2019 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts[1]
Hienghene (C)	18	15	2	1	60	15	65
Magenta	18	14	3	1	56	19	63
Mont-Dore	18	7	3	8	34	30	42
Tiga Sport	18	7	3	8	29	29	42
Ne Drehu	18	6	6	6	25	31	42
Losi	18	6	6	6	31	44	42
Wetr	18	6	2	10	33	35	38
Horizon Patho	18	5	4	9	27	36	37
Trio Ked'gne[2]	18	4	2	12	27	53	32
Wacaele (R)	18	4	1	13	28	58	31

[1]4pts for a win, 2pts for a draw,1pt for a defeat
[2]Enter rel/prom play-offs

KEY TO TABLES
(C) = champions
(R) = relegated
(P) = promoted
(Q) = qualified for next stage
(QF) = qualified for finals

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Historic...Hertha (in blue) and Union contest Berlin's first top-flight derby for 42 years

HERTHA BERLIN v UNION BERLIN

The teams that brought East and West together in a once-divided city

Germany's capital has been home to more Bundesliga teams than any other city, yet November's game between Union and Hertha at the Stadion An der Alten Forsterei was only the fifth top-flight meeting between two Berlin clubs – and the first for 42 years.

Union Berlin's promotion last season saw them follow in the footsteps of Tasmania 1900 Berlin, Blau-Weiss Berlin, Tennis Borussia Berlin and Hertha Berlin, but they became the first side from east Berlin to sit at the top table.

As for a Hertha-Union rivalry, for many years theirs was more a mutual appreciation society.

Before the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, Hertha supporters would regularly cross from west to east to watch Union, while Union fans would travel to support Hertha when they played in eastern Europe.

However, Union's rise up the divisions has seen an increase in tension between the two sets of fans – as witnessed by an attempted pitch invasion this season.

While Hertha claim to represent the whole of the city and train in all 12 districts of Berlin, Union's support originates from the neighbourhood of Kopenick and is fiercely working class.

Such is their fans' devotion, when Union were at risk of losing their licence in 2008, not only did they help to rebuild the dilapidated stadium, they even raised funds by selling their blood to local hospitals! WS

Changing times... things are not quite so friendly these days

CLASSIC ENCOUNTERS

1990 Jan 17
Seventy-nine days after the fall of the Berlin Wall, Union beat Hertha 2-1 at the Olympiastadion in a friendly watched by 52,000 fans.

2010 Sep 17
The first meeting in 2.Bundesliga ends in a 1-1 draw at the Stadion An der Alten Forsterei.

2012 Sep 3
Following relegation, Hertha are back in the second tier and win 2-1 on their trip to the east of the city.

2019 Nov 2
Sebastian Polter's 87th-minute penalty gives Union a 1-0 victory as the two sides meet in the top flight for the first time.

ON BOTH SIDES

KARSTEN HEINE
● 1973-82, 1985-86; (coach) 1988-90, 1996-97
● (coach) 1991, 1994-95, 2007, 2009

RENE UNGLAUBE
● 1985-88
● 1989-91

MARKO REHMER
● 1990-97
● 1999-2005

HANS MEYER
● (coach) 1995
● (coach) 2004

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